

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

By

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ABSTRACT

I made a decision to do this Doctorate of Ministry (D.Min.) project on the topic of domestic/intimate violence in the Harlem community, and what the church is, or is not doing, to remedy the situation. It certainly is not a new phenomenon but one that has been going on in the shadows of our urban communities for many years. One of the first things I'd like to do is help people to understand that this behavior is a crime and then to bring it out in the open where it can be properly dealt with.

Once people become aware that this problem is so pervasive I wanted to present possible solutions that churches can institute, first for their own congregants then to the community as a whole.

After talking with members of several Harlem churches, I found out that many people are not up to date on what kind of behaviors constitute domestic violence. Most people, especially older church members, had very limited views of what it means to be violated by someone who say they love you. I was pleased however to find out that those same elder members, along with the others, were quite interested in hearing more on the topic from the pulpit.

SPECIAL DEDICATION

This special dedication is made on behalf of the Rev. Vernon Daughtry, my colleague, friend and fellow D.Min. Candidate who lost his battle with cancer. Since Vernon and I were working on similar topics, I feel that he continues to live through this project I have completed.

This work is dedicated to the sacred memory
of my Aunt, Mrs. Ida B. Glover-Franklin, and
my Friend, Mrs. Kersandra Tucker-Brown, two women
who lost their lives at the hands
of abusive men.

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It is impossible for me to list the many people who helped me through this most arduous but wonderful process. I first give all praises to the Lord. I thank my mother, Mrs. Mary Alice Noble, a survivor who allowed me to share her story; my special friend, Mr. George Smalls, a constant believer in me, and supporter of my work. I am grateful for the diligent work of my Site Team Members: Rev. Reynold Batson, Rev. Sharon Reese, Ms. Melvina Brown, and Ms. Patricia Somerville.

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Last, but by no means least, I wholeheartedly thank my Pastor and Advisor, The Rev. Dr. V. DuWayne Battle who guided me through the final two years of this project.

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INTRODUCTION

As young children we were taught that if a boy pulled a girl's hair or chased her down to hit her, it meant that he was simply displaying the fact that he liked her. But what happens when the boy and girl grow up? Does this behavior mean the same thing? Unfortunately too many people believe it does; I say absolutely not! What may have been cute in second grade is now brutal and bloody behavior that destroys so much in the lives of everyone involved and society as a whole.

One sector in which this behavior is prevalent is the church. My goal in this project is to bring awareness and education to the churches of the Harlem community. While domestic violence happens to people of all faith communities, I decided to focus my work primarily where I worship, the St. Paul Baptist Church. Raising the consciousness of a church and community to a controversial topic is often not easy, nor is it always welcomed. I will speak more about this in the Biblical/Theological chapter.

I decided to write about the topic of domestic violence based on the early years of my life, specifically between ages three and nine. Before making this decision official with the seminary I spoke with my mother and asked if she would be comfortable with my writing about her years as a battered wife. Her response was *"We're out of that situation so feel free to use whatever you need to complete your work."* During the years I outlined we lived in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

Our family was comprised of my mother, stepfather whom she married when I was 3 years old, my brother 1 ½, and our two sisters, born of this marriage. My stepfather was a blue

collar worker and my mother worked at the hospital as a nurse's aide, therefore we didn't have a lot of money coming in and most of the time lived paycheck to paycheck. But even with limited resources my mother worked hard at seeing that her children were happy.

Allow me to physically describe her so you will understand the full impact of what I am about to write. In her twenties and thirties my mother was 5'7" inches tall and weighed approximately one hundred and thirty pounds. She was a very attractive woman who was extremely fair, with naturally red hair and freckles. She always reminded me of Lucille Ball because she often wore her flaming red hair in a bun or ponytail like the actress. There were even times when white people in our town thought she was one of them and taunted her and her husband because he was of a very dark complexion. During the 1950s and 1960s the Deep South was not happy about mixing of the races. The reason my mother and some of her other relatives could pass for white is because her maternal grandmother, who died at the age of 112 in 1964, had been born on a plantation in South Carolina and made to bear the first four of her twenty-one children after being raped by a slave master.

I needed to set the stage because due to the fairness of her skin, it did not take much for my mother to bruise. Therefore whenever my stepfather hit her it showed immediately and lasted weeks, and sometimes months. There were many beatings over the six or seven years we lived with him, but I particularly remember one night when the whole family was asleep and I was awakened by her screams.

I could hear her begging and pleading with him to stop hitting her and turn on the light so they could talk. He did turn the light on but there was no talking to him. My stepfather was an extremely jealous and insecure man who constantly accused my mother of cheating on him. As I stood in the doorway of their bedroom, he dragged her out of bed and began kicking and

stomping her, then picked up a piece of wood and began to beat her with it. In defense she threw up her hands to protect her face, and several fingers were fractured. By now my three siblings were up and screaming and all I could do was to try and calm them down.

The next day after he left for work we went in to see about our mother; she was lying in bed black and blue all over. Her face was badly bruised and swollen but her hands were worse. Both hands were purple and swollen so big that she couldn't move any of her fingers, which meant she couldn't care for herself or us children at all. There would be no cooking of breakfast, no putting out of clothing, and no braiding the hair of her three little girls. Our only saving grace was the fact that one of her sisters lived just a block away from us and she sent me to get my aunt so she could help us, which she did every day for weeks until my mother started getting better.

That was the last time I witnessed my stepfather physically abuse my mother. We remained in the home with him until her bruises completely healed and everything seemed like business as usual, but unbeknownst to us children she had put a plan in motion. During this time our maternal grandmother was living in Harlem and working as a domestic in Scarsdale, New York.

Somehow my mother was able to get word to her mother about how badly we were being treated and that she was afraid he might kill her the next time. My grandmother shared this information with her employer, who was a prominent surgeon, and the family gave her enough money for us to purchase bus tickets to travel to New York City. The money was sent by Western Union in my aunt's name because they didn't want my stepfather to know about it; somehow he always seemed to know where my mother went.

On the evening of February 8, 1964 we boarded a Trailways Bus in Orangeburg, South Carolina and arrived in New York City the next morning. My stepfather actually followed us to

the station when it became evident we were really leaving and begged my mother to stay with him, promising the world, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. In the south we had never experienced snow or very cold temperatures and were therefore ill clad for the weather that met us. We all wore sweaters under light weight wool jackets, and we had paper in the bottom of our shoes, but we were free. My mother's youngest brother met us at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, packed us all in a big checker cab and took us to our grandmother's apartment in Harlem. I will never forget that day because it changed all our lives forever.

Although she never divorced her husband, she never went back to him and for that I am grateful to God. We saw him a few times afterward during summertime visits to family members, until he was killed in a work related accident in 1983; my mother married her current husband in 1986. It wasn't until I became an adult that I fully realized just how much my mother had suffered at the hands of her first husband.

I wish I could tell you that this was the end of domestic violence in my family but it was not. The aunt who had helped us so much while in South Carolina, also moved to New York City shortly after we did, with her two children and longtime boyfriend. They seemed to be doing great for a while then he began beating her. Her oldest child, a boy my age, had to leave his mother's home and live with our grandmother because he constantly talked about killing his stepfather each time he saw his mother being hit. To make matters worse, she decided to marry this man and have three children with him. Every adult in our family pleaded with her not to do this crazy thing, but she didn't listen to anyone and went on to marry him. The beatings continued through all three pregnancies, each one worse than the last, often landing her in the hospital for weeks at a time. She was burned with hot cooking oil, he knocked her down an

entire flight of stairs, he broke several ribs, blinded her in one eye, and inflicted other injuries too numerous to list.

I'm sure my aunt felt like her situation was hopeless and a once beautiful, vibrant woman began to drink in order to deal with the emotional, psychological and physical pain in her life. Every time her husband beat her, family members would retaliate and harm him in return, rescue her and the children and bring them to safety; she would invariably find her way back to him.

In November 1976 my aunt's oldest son and I were both twenty two years of age, her second child, a daughter, was nineteen, and the three children she had with her husband were five, six and seven years of age. Once again, right after Thanksgiving Day, he beat her and she landed in the hospital.

I, along with the other women of my family went to visit her at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. Her head was so swollen it looked as big as a basketball. Her eyes were swollen shut and she could barely talk. While standing around her bed she managed to grasp my hand and indicated she wanted to say something to me. I put my ear close to her mouth and she made me promise never to let a man abuse me the way she had been. I told her I would keep that promise to her, and to this day I have done just that.

Upon her discharge from the hospital she joined her children at my grandmother's apartment. On December 18, 1976 our world fell apart. My thirty-seven year old aunt had gone to bed the night before with her six year old son beside her; he woke up, she did not. She had passed away during the night from complications of that latest brutal beating. When the police arrived they were informed of the beating and subsequent hospitalization, they questioned her husband but decided to release him based on "not enough evidence."

So.....we took her body back to South Carolina and buried her on Christmas Eve. Instead of her five, six and seven year olds being anxious and excited about what Santa would bring them that night, they were standing soberly, in shock, like the rest of us, at the graveside of their mother. As you might imagine, Christmas for our family has not been the same since that day. We moved on with our lives as best we could, the children grew up, none have married to date and three of them had children of their own, but that day in 1976 is never far from the surface of celebrations when we get together.

My grandmother never fully recovered from the death of her daughter; raising those three little ones was a constant reminder of our loss. Her health continued to decline until April 1985 when she could no longer hold up under that awful weight and decided it was time for her to also “give up the ghost.” The two women I’ve told you about (my mother and aunt) aren’t the only family members to be abused by intimate partners. Even after the death of my aunt her two younger sisters for a while experienced some of what she went through.

While I have never been brutally beaten by a man, I have been viciously slapped by someone with whom I was contemplating marriage. I was in my mid twenties and felt that this guy was a “good catch” as husband material based on the way he originally presented himself. However, after a brief period I realized he possessed the same jealous spirit my stepfather had displayed toward my mother. To make matters worse, this guy was a member of New York City Police Department, and was not above displaying his weapon to me in intimidating ways. Immediately after that slap I realized if I stayed in the relationship I would not have been able to keep my promise made to my aunt several years earlier. Since that time I have witnessed relatives and friends alike in abusive relationships.

In 1995 one of my friends, who attended the same church I did at the time, tried to break up with a boyfriend whom she found out was just using her. On a beautiful Sunday in May of that year we enjoyed a wonderful worship service and stood outside talking for a while. As she walked away a few minutes later she smiled and said, "I'll see you next Sunday, have a blessed week." When she left me she went to have dinner with her father who was also a member of our congregation.

She told him to go on ahead because the guy she wanted to get rid of had come to the church to talk with her and she agreed to hear what he had to say because she didn't want him to make a scene. She drove her car to her father's, rang the intercom and said she was on her way upstairs. Her dad went to unlock the door so she could just walk in but after several minutes she didn't get off the elevator. Being Sunday he assumed a lot of people may have been coming in from worship services at the same time and it was taking just a bit longer than usual. Finally after twenty minutes had gone by he decided to go downstairs and find out what was taking her so long. He pressed for the elevator and when the door opened on his floor, he found his beautiful daughter's body on the floor with her throat cut. The guy had followed her from our church to her father's home and killed her because she wouldn't take him back. He then took off

in her car but was caught several hours later and arrested; he received a life sentence and is in jail today.

On the next Sunday we were having her funeral service at the church where she and I said we would meet. As I stood in the pulpit and read her quite lengthy obituary everything in me wanted to scream "WHY?" Why did you have to take from us such a beautiful soul? Why couldn't you just leave her alone like she asked you? WHY? Of course I couldn't say those

things then; her parents, siblings and two children were all expecting the clergy to at least maintain a sense of decorum and strength, even while the tears streamed down our faces.

I readily admit to you that like millions of others, I don't understand this phenomenon called battered spouse syndrome. Even though I've seen it happen over and over again, I am at a loss as to why it continues, seemingly unabated. My hope and prayer is that one day this term can be permanently deleted from the list of known syndromes because it will no longer exist.

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

As an associate minister at the St. Paul Baptist Church in Harlem, New York, I have noticed a culture of silence surrounding domestic violence in the African American Church. This demonstration project will seek to heighten awareness of the problem and create viable solutions to help survivors heal.

CHAPTER 1

THE SETTING

I became a member of the St. Paul Baptist Church in March 2003 after worshipping with another Harlem congregation for twenty years. As an Associate Minister my responsibilities include teaching Adult Sunday School classes, leading New Disciples Instruction, and serving as Minister of Congregational Care and Evangelism. St. Paul was started on March 23, 1893, by thirteen Black men and women. They named the church St. Paul Colored Baptist Church and their dream became a reality. Originally, places of worship were found in lodge halls, over stables, and anywhere rent could be paid. In 1902 the church purchased an old police station at 352 West 35th Street; after several years of worship the congregation moved to Harlem. The present location at 249 West 132nd Street was planned and built in 1928 under the leadership of Reverend H.A. Booker whose pastorate lasted more than forty-three years.

St. Paul is a Black Baptist Church and is a member of both American Baptist Churches and the National Baptist Convention. A lot of the members have migrated from the southern states and Caribbean Islands. The older members especially have brought and maintained some of their ideas and beliefs about church worship. By that I mean they feel that when one enters God's house there is a certain way to deport one's self, that there is a way to dress appropriately and that children are to be taught how to behave.

Our congregation has been blessed to have many members of great longevity. Many of them are in their 70's, 80's and even 90's. Some have been members more than fifty years and still attend faithfully when their health permits. For the members of St. Paul, their church is their

life. Parishioners make their way to worship services, sometimes even when the weather is not so good. Whether there is sickness, or any kind of trouble, most of the congregation possesses the belief that if they can just make it to the house of God and have someone pray with them, then their situation won't seem quite so bad. St. Paul is known as the church with a heart in the heart of Harlem, therefore that love and caring begins with our own people then branches out into the community.

Several years ago the "YES WE CARE" ministry was created by a few members who are faithful to contact members who have not been present in any worship services for a period of time. Telephone calls are made, cards are sent out and visits take place. Sometimes meals are prepared for the individual, or if they prefer to prepare their own meals, food will be brought to them for that purpose. While this ministry is primarily to our congregants, our church does operate a Food Pantry in which we give substantial bags of grocery items to members of the community.

For many years the church owned three brownstone buildings on the same block where we are currently located. A few years ago those buildings were sold, resulting in a net income for the church. The acquisition of these monies has allowed the congregation to make some much needed repairs and renovations to our physical plant.

The church is a beautiful red brick building located on the north side of 132nd Street, between Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard on the left and Frederick Douglass Boulevard on the right. We are one of two houses of worship on the block; the other is St. Aloysius Catholic Church with whom we have a very close relationship.

The first thing we did was to have a brand new roof put on the building because for several years there were leaks in certain parts of the sanctuary. The entire electrical system has

been upgraded throughout the building so that air conditioning can be installed and the sound system upgraded as well. When we began the electrical work in the lower auditorium we were unable to use the kitchen or the dining area to prepare and serve food. All these renovations have been inconvenient at times, however, we understand that if improvements are not made now, the structural integrity of the building is in jeopardy, as well as the comfort and safety of the worshippers who come and go within this space. Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: “Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” (Haggai 1:3-4).

A smaller congregation from the community had the misfortune to lose their place of worship a few years ago and St. Paul opened her doors to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Once our Sunday morning worship is completed and we have no scheduled afternoon services, this congregation comes during the afternoon and uses the facilities for their own worship. We have developed a great camaraderie and relationship with them and have shared in services on occasion. Recently members of St. Paul collected food, clothing and toiletries, and brought them to the church. On a cold Saturday morning we joined with that other church and went out to several locations in the Harlem community distributing these items, along with sandwiches and hot meals.

When members of my family and I joined St. Paul in 2003 Rev. Dr. Earl B. Moore was the Pastor, having served the church for 43 years. On March 28, 2004, the occasion of the 111th Anniversary Dr. Moore announced his intention to retire as pastor, effective October 23, 2005. Prior to his retirement, he arranged with Rev. James Stallings, Regional Director of American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York to serve as the church’s Spiritual Advisor, and

Advisor to the Pulpit Search Committee. On May 31, 2006 the Lord called our beloved pastor home.

Following the death of Dr. Moore, the congregation was in a state of mourning for some time. Eventually we came to realize that we had to put things into perspective and move forward. It was agreed that one of the five Associate Ministers, Rev. Reynold Batson, would serve as Interim Pastor until a pastor could be located by the Search Committee. As we prepared to look for a new leader of our congregation, I began to think seriously about some of the social problems of the Harlem community.

After a two year period the pulpit search committee informed the congregation they had found a viable candidate from the thirty resumes received. Each of them who sent applications were interviewed but not considered for various reasons. The one candidate who appeared to be God's choice for our congregation was the Rev. Dr. V. DuWayne Battle. He preached his first sermon on Father's Day, June 15, 2008. The following week he met in individual meetings with the ministerial staff, diaconate, trustees, and leadership council of the church. On July 12, 2008 an official church wide vote was conducted using written ballots and overseen by Rev. Stallings.

Although I believe God's Hand was instrumental in Dr. Battle coming to St. Paul, his appointment has not been without controversy. There were those who did not agree with the decision of the majority and therefore have left the St. Paul Church to worship elsewhere. Dr. Battle was lovingly received by most of the remaining congregation and immediately began teaching Bible study and preaching on Sunday mornings. Each Saturday morning from 10:30 – 12:30 all leaders of the church were asked to attend what he has termed the St. Paul Leadership Academy. After several months with the leadership then the entire congregation was invited to attend and learn as well.

Dr. Battle's first mission as pastor of a new congregation was to find out what we as a people believed, and where we wanted to go. During those six months or so of Saturday morning meetings we began by talking about God's relationship to us, and our relationship to God and others. We were able to come up with what we wanted the world to know about St. Paul Baptist Church; that we are engaged in a celebration of life. Then we chose five words that we felt described this celebration: *Adoration, Proclamation, Supplication, Reconciliation, and Dedication*. These words became a logo which has since that time graced the front cover of our Sunday bulletins. I can celebrate life because of where I am in my walk with God, but I want to convince and encourage my sisters who feel otherwise because of a domestic violence situation that it is God's desire that they too celebrate.

The people of our church have been richly blessed by God with the presence of Dr. Battle. In addition to the Leadership Academy Dr. Battle has instituted a number of other innovations to move the church forward. On January 1, 2009 we began our Footsteps Bible Reading Program where members as a whole would read the entire Bible in one year. The New Year also began with a Daniel Fast, to teach some, and remind others of the importance of sacrifice to the Lord. The latest teaching is a Bible study entitled "Basic Christian Beliefs."

Our church sits in the middle of central Harlem and we are surrounded by socioeconomic issues of not enough affordable housing and not enough suitable employment. I believe that these, among other "lacks" in the community, such as young people not completing their education and unlawful drug activity, are sometimes responsible for the high incidence of domestic violence in the Harlem community. This abuse I speak of is not a new phenomenon associated only with modern times. It's a social ill that has permeated all communities for decades.

This geographical location is important to my project because so many women of Harlem and like communities are victims and/or survivors of intimate relationships in which violence has occurred. Certainly the Harlem community has changed greatly in the past ten years, with new and better housing, cleaner streets, as well as new stores, restaurants and fitness centers. But the fact remains that men are still abusing the women with whom they have intimate relationships. I don't know for certain if there are people in St. Paul Baptist Church who, if not currently being abused, may have been in the past, and kept it to themselves, however, as stated, I personally have family members and friends who are survivors and victims of domestic abuse.

As I was deciding on my topic for the Demonstration Project, one of the items that came to mind as I prayed about and pondered what kind of person our next pastor would be, was that of domestic violence. I remember thinking that he or she should be someone who is willing to acknowledge the existence of the problem, and take some positive action against it in St. Paul as well as in the Harlem community. When abuse is addressed from the pulpit, in the pastoral study, in women's Bible study classes, in Sunday school or in premarital workshops, those who have experienced its pain receive encouragement to come forward. The implicit message rings out; this church, or this pastoral study is a safe place to recount your experience of being hurt. Giving violence a name and condemning it publicly is one tangible way that congregations and their leaders can respond directly to violence that occurs among women and men in their church family.¹ Dr. Battle has proven himself to be such a person. Through our many conversations he has expressed his absolute displeasure in this type of behavior, and his willingness to help in eradicating it from the lives of people. He has an extensive history of counseling and working with survivors of domestic violence and their families.

¹ Catherine Clark-Kroegeer and Nancy Nason-Clark, *No Place For Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001) 69.

My primary place of concentration will be the women of the St. Paul Baptist Church. It is important that all women recognize the signs of domestic violence, and though they might not be in such relationships themselves, they may have sisters, daughters or other women in their lives who are being abused. When I began the doctorate program in September 2007 there was no viable women's ministry at my home church, however, I am very happy to say that under the direction of our new pastor's wife, we are currently in the process of re-instituting a women's ministry that will seek to help the women of St. Paul and other churches of our community to grow emotionally, financially and spiritually. Planning has already begun for future activities such as conferences and retreats, as well as some new and innovative ideas we are looking forward to being a part of.

Although Harlem is still predominantly made up of African Americans, Whites, Asians and other groups of people began moving in a decade ago and the influx continues to this day. New and expensive real estate has caused many Blacks to leave the community and seek housing in lower income areas. As stated earlier, Harlem now boasts many new stores and restaurants that cater to the tastes of its newer residents. This is the community to which St. Paul Baptist Church must present the gospel. Our church is welcoming of all people, realizing that our commission from Jesus is to preach the gospel to every person, regardless of race or station in life. It is also important that I reach out to the women of these groups because many of them share the same domestic violence issues as the African American and Hispanic women of Harlem. Even though this is true, many of them do not regard themselves as victims of abuse. Therefore the awareness has to go beyond St. Paul to the entire community of Harlem.

CHAPTER 2 HISTORICAL

While I am concentrating on domestic violence issues as it pertains to female members of Harlem churches, I realize this is a social ill that crosses the lines of all races, religions and real estate. Both men and women are physically violated by their partners, but we would all agree that this problem happens predominantly to women. Because my topic is such a vast one I would like to narrow my project and concentrate on educating and informing those who are survivors of abuse about choices which are available to them.

In modern history we have seen the rise of domestic violence in the lives of those we admired and even revered. Women who we watched on television and the big screen of Hollywood were being physically hurt by the men who proposed to love them dearly. In 1983 actor David Soul stunned the world by admitting that he was abusive to his wife Patti. A couple of years later John Fedders of the Securities and Exchange Commission resigned his position as Chief Regulator after confessing that he had broken his wife's eardrum, wrenched her neck and left her with black and blue bruises. And who among us can forget the pictures on our television screens of Hedda Nussbaum as she talked about the many beatings she received at the hands of Joel Steinberg, a New York Attorney? ²

Just when this story settles down our worlds were rocked to the core by the O.J. Simpson saga. This was probably the most shocking, and longest lasting in terms of media coverage and

² Michele Ingrassia and Melinda Beck, "Patterns of Abuse," *Newsweek*, July 4, 1994, 26.

sensationalism. Here we have a national sports hero in O.J. who is accused of murdering his wife Nicole. The country became divided down the middle; right down the color line. As heinous as the deaths of Mrs. Simpson and her friend Ron Goldman were, I don't believe they would have received as much attention if the victim had been a Black woman and her husband had not been O.J. Simpson. Yet for all the horror, there is a measure of futility in these tales: one moment, they ignite mass outrage; then the topic fades from the screen.³

According to a recent *Essence Magazine* article, Black women are abused at a rate 35 percent higher than that of White women. It's believed that fewer than half of all domestic violence cases are ever reported; of those that are, only about ten percent are ever prosecuted because plaintiffs more often than not recant their stories.⁴ There are other celebrity relationships in which abuse happens. Boxer Mike Tyson was accused of beating his wife Robin Givens, who subsequently divorced him. In the world of rap music, we find rapper, Christopher "Big Punisher" Rios. As I watched a documentary on his life, his wife Liza talked very candidly about how much she was physically abused at the hands of her husband. To the public he was a wonderful guy but when he came home all hell broke loose. She stated that she never reported the abuse because that would be seen as "snitching" in the world they lived in. Big Pun eventually blew up to over 500 pounds and died at the age of 28 in 2000.

In more recent years we've seen people who set the standard for church life being caught up in domestic violence incidents. Prophetess Juanita Bynum and her husband Bishop Weeks have had their private war aired on television, as well as in the newspapers and magazines. If our Pastors are beating their wives where does that leave the parishioner? How can the church

³ Michelle Ingrassia and Melinda Beck, "Patterns of Abuse," *Newsweek*, July 4, 1994, 26.

⁴ Robin D. Stone, "Our Secret Pain," *Essence Magazine*, June 2009, 120.

assist its congregants if its leaders are engaged in the same crazy behavior? Both these spiritual giants were/are pasturing many, many people on any given day, yet they could not control the anger that erupted into what essentially amounted to a street fight.

Once again we sat in front of our television sets as photographs of the bruised and swollen face of pop singer Rihanna flashed across the screen; the bruises and contusions reportedly the result of a fight with her then boyfriend Chris Brown. Like the O.J. Simpson case this one caused a firestorm of comments on both sides. However, instead of being divided down racial lines, the public was taking sides based on gender and whose music they liked better. Unlike the two aforementioned preachers, Chris and Rihanna are two *very young* millionaires who are just beginning their lives. The only good thing about the situation with both Prophetess Bynum and the singer Rihanna, is that they are financially able to leave their situations whereas most women cannot.

Even as I sit and write, politicians like Hiram Monserrat are being tried in courts of law for physically abusing those with whom they are intimately involved. And finally there's the most recent case of actor Charlie Sheen being arrested for allegedly threatening his wife in an abusive manner. I've pointed out the cases of these people of means and influence to show that domestic violence happens to ALL women, no matter her race, culture or station in life; no one is exempt from this insidious blight that happens to people the world over.

Some members of our society are so naïve as to believe that middle and upper class white women aren't beaten at all, or at least not as much as lower class minorities. The reason for this myth is probably due to the fact that upper and middle class women do not report abuse as much. They are afraid of embarrassment from friends and family and do not want to harm their husband's usually prominent careers.

Another myth believes most battered women to be uneducated, with few if any job skills. This simply is not true. There are many women with professional degrees who are beaten by the men in their lives. Many are not allowed to work because of the husband's jealousy and desire to know what they are doing every hour of the day. If she were allowed to be around other people he fears she might make friends and have the need to rely on someone other than him. There are people who actually believe that battered women deserve to get beaten. Folks are quick to say she was too busy, too sloppy, too provocative in her dress, and any number of other things. The public seems always ready to think the worst about a person in this type of situation, so therefore a woman must have done something to provoke her husband.

There are some characteristics that are common to battered women:

- The battered woman usually has low self esteem. She firmly believes that she is no good and worthless, because otherwise she would not be beaten. She underestimates her abilities to do anything and believes nothing she does will be successful.
- She believes all the myths about battering relationships. Because society condones these myths the battered woman has become brainwashed in her thinking.
- Many battered women have severe stress reactions which show up as psycho physiological complaints. They often go from doctor to doctor looking for a cure for a physical ailment that's really in her head.
- They believe that no one will be able to help resolve their predicament. She feels that she is all alone because her family or his usually tell her to try and stay together and work things out. The police and other= authorities usually don't want to get involved either.
- Most battered women suffer from guilt about staying in these relationships and they also deny the anger and hatred felt for their husbands. They might never admit that they would like to kill him and that they are terrified of him, as well as of her own feelings.

I selected this topic after much discussion with my site team because this problem has been prevalent in my family's history. I have seen women to whom I am related abused in every

way, even to the point of physical death. When my mother's sister was killed by her husband at 37 years of age, leaving five children, I, along with the rest of the family, had to deal with and make sense out of what happened to her. Therefore this problem of domestic violence is one that is near to my heart and I suppose by doing this project I too am still looking for answers more than thirty years later.

I am not so naïve as to believe that this one project will stop the problem of domestic violence, however a few more people will become aware of it and hopefully begin to speak out. Many of the resources I will need are already within my site team. One member is currently Director of a battered women's shelter. I have another very close friend who has worked many years in a different shelter for women and children. I have talked extensively with each of these women and their insight has been invaluable. My target group, women of St. Paul Baptist Church, will likely be very supportive of this project. Even if they are not personally experiencing this type of abuse themselves chances are they know of a woman who is.

Contrary to popular belief there are hundreds of thousands of women beaten every day by the men in their lives. For those members of the population who are aware of the situation, it's clouded with any number of untruths. It is commonly believed that only a small percentage of the population is affected. This is not so, nearly one third of all American homes have experienced a battering incident. Battered women are not masochistic as some believe and do not enjoy getting beaten.

Many people use this ideology to try and understand these women. Women who suffer this atrocity are also not crazy. This myth comes into being by blaming the women for having negative personality characteristics. I don't doubt that harsh treatment could indeed develop

severe emotional problems in a woman (I've seen it happen in my own family), but the abusive treatment contributes to mental health problems.

One myth single women perpetrate themselves is that his violent reactions will change once they are married. No man who beats his woman before marriage is going to stop after the "I do's" have been said. If anything, the husband becomes more jealous, demanding and possessive because now he feels that even the law is on his side. Yet another myth that women tell themselves is that they are only staying for the sake of the children. I can appreciate the ideal family of both parents in a home, but what are the emotional prices paid by the children? They live in constant fear of being beaten themselves or sexually abused while watching their mother constantly hurt, and they may eventually need psychological help. Also, many of these women remain with their husbands long after the children are out of the home.

It is a known fact that domestic violence is, and has been a problem for many thousands of years. Because this particular crime is not one that's usually done in front of witnesses (except children) it's difficult to accurately track the occurrences. From a social/cultural point of view, the woman was considered the property of the man and his duty was to discipline her and the children (and slaves/servants) with thorough beatings. Consistent with eighteenth-century English common law, the only concerns about this related to the thickness of the stick that the law allowed for the beatings.⁵

Domestic violence is definitely a crime but it's one that our law enforcement agencies have not taken seriously until late in the 20th century. Prior to this time social services for victims were almost nonexistent. Historically, households were seen as patriarchal and men sometimes ruled their families with a more than firm hand. Women generally took a subordinate

⁵ Randal W. Summers and Allan M. Hoffman, eds. *Domestic Violence: A Global View* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 170.

role (sometimes to their own sons) and suffered their abuse in silence. Unfortunately the police felt that this was a private matter to be dealt with at home. And, in case a woman did get up the nerve to report the abuse, she was usually encouraged to go back to her husband. On the rare occasion that a woman goes so far as to obtain an “Order of Protection” she finds that even this bold step will not stop her batterer. Many of the men simply ignore this legal document and continue to harm the women.

It is said that the first laws of marriage were proclaimed by Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome. These laws obliged the married woman to conform herself entirely to her husband’s temper, and the men were to rule their wives as possessions. Obedience could not be withheld from a husband without serious consequences. A man’s wife was considered his property and subject to whatever form of control he deemed necessary. The law, along with her husband stipulated what appropriate behavior was. Roman husbands had the legal right to chastise, divorce, or kill their wives for engaging in behavior they themselves engaged in daily. If she were caught dipping in the family wine cellar, attending public games without his permission or walking outdoors with her face uncovered, she could be beaten. One Roman husband, Egnatius Metellus beat his wife to death because she had drunk some wine. He was not even blamed for her murder, much less punished, because the people believed she had received her just reward because the wine had the potential of opening her heart to all kinds of vices.⁶

It is a sad situation that society (old & current) has given the impression that a woman can be owned by her husband or boyfriend. As a young woman I dated three guys who were extremely jealous and possessive. They wanted to know everywhere I went, who I went with and what time I returned. Like most young women I had no idea this was an abusive situation; I

⁶ Russell Dobash, *Violence Against Wives* (New York, NY: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co., 1979) 37.

thought these guys really cared so much about me that they just couldn't stand being away from me. Unfortunately, so many women feel today as I did those many years ago. This need for love and acceptance possibly stemmed from an unstable childhood in which girls did not receive from their own fathers what was needed. Because of what I saw happening to women in my family, I'm happy to say that I did not remain very long in those relationships; they would have been detrimental to me.

During the Medieval Age, in a world made up of large fortified households vying with each other for domination, the women of the feudal lords served as commodities and as symbols of power and honor of men. Because the selection of a marriage partner was of great importance girls had little or no choice in who they would marry. If they refused the man their fathers chose, they were beaten. Once married the woman and all her goods became the property of her husband and his family.

In 1562 the "Hominy on Marriage" was published and read every Sunday in church. It stated that the wife's obedience was a primary necessity if she wanted a happy Christian marriage. This period marked an age of legalized beatings in the home and school. During the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries the community did not object if a man used force against his wife, so long as he did not exceed a certain limit. He was allowed to deliver blows, punches or kicks to the back as long as he didn't leave lasting traces. He could not hit her in the head or stomach, and if she was pregnant or had recently given birth, he was considered a brute if he beat her then.

In America, wife beating was made illegal in Alabama and Massachusetts in 1871. It was ruled that "the privilege, ancient though it be, to beat her with a stick, to pull her hair, choke her, spit in her face or kick her about the floor, or to inflict upon her other like indignities, is not now acknowledged by our law."

By the end of the nineteenth century, the right of chastisement was expressly rejected. In 1894 the Mississippi court, which had been the first to legalize chastisement, repudiated that earlier decision and described it as a “revolting precedent.” Courts declared that the rule of love superseded the rule of force and the moral sense of community revolts at the idea that the husband may inflict personal chastisement upon his wife, even for the most outrageous conduct.⁷ Despite what the law said, wife beating continued and yet remains a very common and outrageous occurrence.

Sociologically speaking, the question of intimate violence has been talked about, looked at, researched and studied by any number of doctors, social workers, shelter administrators, and even a few churches. This type of behavior has been a blight on many families and communities for generations. It continues to be so because of the stigma attached to speaking out about it. People (survivors, family members and others) have been made to believe that whatever happens in their private homes should remain that way. When you have a relationship with someone, respect her body, because there are also forbidden zones in her body. Not only must you respect her heart, her consciousness, and her mind but you must also respect her body, because body and mind are one. Respect is very important in the teachings of all cultures.⁸

My project seeks to remove the aforementioned stigma and let people know there’s nothing to be ashamed of, if they are trying to correct the situation. A collaborative effort needs to happen between law enforcement, hospital staff, child welfare and social service agencies, as well as local churches.

⁷ Russell Dobash, *Violence Against Wives*, 63.

⁸ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your community and the World* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 130-131.

Without everyone working together the problem continues unabated. You cannot be called a civilized person if you do not act in a responsible way. To be responsible means to love. “I protect you because I love you. I refrain from doing certain things because they would destroy both of us. This is why we vow “to learn ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society.”⁹ People who abuse need to learn better alternatives; society as a whole sometimes seems to be like the proverbial ostrich with its head stuck in the sand (**See Appendix A**).

Those who abuse other people seem to be concerned only about themselves. Having witnessed many years of physical abuse among my relatives I know from personal experience that most people who abuse will not voluntarily submit to counseling or treatment of any kind for behavior they don’t consider a problem. I have actually heard some men say that there is nothing wrong with them, that this is how men are supposed to be as head of their households. That attitude is definitely not what is needed if we are going to stop domestic violence.

Men who abuse need to be re-educated and trained to change their sexist behavior. By and large, a “holy hush” pervades religious organizations. Violence is ugly, and most churches and their leaders feel uncomfortable talking about it and ill-equipped to respond to its victims. The issue is very sensitive, and many people and pastors alike would prefer to sweep it under the proverbial church carpet. Moreover, violence touches many people at the core of their being, because they either recognize in themselves the tendency to control others or have suffered humiliation at the hands of someone else.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid, 139.

¹⁰ Catherine Clark-Kroegeer and Nancy Nason-Clark, *No Place For Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001) 15.

History has taught me that not enough women report this heinous crime to the proper authorities, and therefore don't get the help needed. I certainly never saw the abused women of my family go to the police and press charges against the men who hurt them. This is one area where we don't want history to repeat itself, therefore vigorous changes need to happen in the lives of men and the women they abuse.

The Shield of Athena Family Services Center is a non-profit organization operating out of Montreal, Quebec offers services to survivors and families of domestic violence. They state that most of the clients who have been victims of family violence first go to their family or friends for help. Yet, abused women may be faced with silence at the community level, where domestic violence is not openly discussed and indeed may even be tolerated.....When people are not sensitized and informed, there are no common definitions of domestic violence. As a consequence, there is no framework for discussion and comparison. Such violence is therefore invisible.¹¹

It is extremely difficult for women to convince their partners to stop the physical and other abuse when society has supported such behavior. Before the late twentieth century it seems there was no recourse because religion, the law and other institutions supported a man's decision to behave aggressively toward the women he loves. From the Old Testament advocacy of stoning women who could not prove their virginity, to church exhortation of men to uphold their divine responsibility of beating their wives, to Gratian's *Decretum*, a 12th –century “philosophical” basis for church law which decreed that {w}omen should be subject to their men....Fra Cherubino's *Rules of Marriage*, which was written in the 15th century and guided the Catholic Church for some 400 years, gave husbands the following advice on conjugal conduct:

¹¹ Peter G. Jaffe, Linda L. Baker and Alison J. Cunningham, eds., *Protecting Children from Domestic Violence: Strategies for Community Intervention* (New York: Guilford Press, 2004), 143.

“scold her sharply, bully and terrify her. And if that.....doesn’t work, take up a stick and beat her soundly, for it is better to punish to body and correct the soul than to damage the soul and spare the body.” This notion of “chastisement” still appears in the rationalization abusive men make for their violence toward wives.¹²

¹² Donald G. Dutton, *The Abusive Personality: Violence and Control in Intimate Relationships* (New York: Guilford Publications, Inc. 1998), 25.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL

In my Introduction I said I would speak more about the difficulty in raising awareness in the church and community. A lot of the problems come from the leadership of our houses of worship and our civic organizations. Why are the majority of Pastors silent on the issue of domestic/intimate violence? Could it be that they are involved in such behavior themselves and therefore speaking out against it would not be a viable option? Also, Pastors and church leaders read the Bible which gives us scriptures that *seemingly* support intimate violence; a more authentic and honest interpretation is needed.

Then there's the question of money. If the abusing man gives a great deal to the church's coffers, I wonder how willing the Pastor and/or Deacons would be to confront him about abusing his wife. I dare say they may not be very willing. There are times when those in the church don't want to acknowledge that domestic violence is happening in the lives of their members, even if they know about it. Some are afraid to say anything because now they may be responsible for helping the woman in various ways. I have heard family members of an abused woman say that they hope she doesn't leave her husband because they did not want her and all those children living with them. No one wants to be put out of their comfort zone, not even for a short period of time. I know this to be a fact because when we arrived in New York City we had to live in my grandmother's apartment with her and my two youngest aunts, who were teens at the time. My mother and her children slept in one bed until we were able to get an apartment of

our own. When Grammy went to work in Scarsdale my aunts would give us a hard time when my mother was not around because they were very possessive of everything and really didn't want us there at first.

Likewise, there are pastors who feel like their lives would be comprised in some way by having to deal with a battered woman's leaving home. Most would like to see the status quo remain so. They do not want the religious boat rocked in any way; no matter how stormy may be her seas.

We need to look at why the faith community has been silent for so long on the issue of domestic violence. As I view this question in light of a Biblical discipline, it becomes apparent that certain parts of scripture may be the basis for the attitudes we see today. Granted the Bible is a patriarchal book, however it is not a book that teaches men to physically or otherwise abuse the women in their lives. It has been used in that way for many centuries to keep people under control and thereby support the exploitation of the people of God. Abused women must be the concern of the church because many abused women are a part of the church. The church has the only message that declares the value of a human being. It is the purpose of the church to dispense the gospel message: unconditional love, forgiveness, grace, mercy, compassion and all the other blessings God has provided for us.¹³

For too long, women have looked at themselves with the eyes of others. I feel they are so busy trying not to seem uppity, trying not to usurp anyone's authority, trying not to show how smart they are, that they inadvertently allow themselves to be treated in a negative way. This is where God's gift of exhortation should come into play and the church encourage and lift up women to think about themselves in the same way God sees them. Furthermore, abused wives

¹³ Betty Coble Lawther and Jenny Potzler, "The Church's Role in the Healing Process of Abused Women," *Review & Expositor* 98, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 225-241, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost>.

should not simply accept their abuse with passive silence, but they should follow Christ's example of responding to abuse in a godly manner. This includes fleeing from abusive husbands and escaping avoidable suffering. Finally, victims of domestic violence must follow Christ's example of allowing God, not their abuser, to define them and establish their worth.¹⁴

I have not really heard anyone at the church I attend, or any other churches I have visited, talk about this problem of domestic violence. However, I do believe it is time for the church to take a positive stand to assist the women who have helped the Church. A woman needs to be assured that when she comes to the house of the Lord looking for assistance, that she will not be disbelieved or turned away. The number of women within the church today who have suffered or are suffering abuse – verbal, physical, emotional, sexual and economical – is astounding. In fact, the percentage of women within the church who have experienced abuse is greater than or equal to the percentage of women outside the church who have experienced similar abuse.¹⁵ There are women who feel that their faith in God ***“locks them in”*** to any type of marriage relationship, good or bad. They feel that it is the Lord's will for their lives and if they suffer now in the flesh, that they will be rewarded later (after death). I believe they take the Biblical term “helpmeet” to another level. Certainly Eph. 5:22 says “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.”¹⁶ But that should not translate into lay down and become a doormat, having no will of your own. Verse 25 of the same chapter says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Then verses 28 and 29 say the following: “In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves

¹⁴ Steven R. Tracy, *Calvin Theological Journal* 41, no. 2 (Nov. 2006): 279-296.

¹⁵ Betty Coble Lawther and Jenny Potzler, “The Church's Role in the Healing Process of Abused Women,” *Review & Expositor* 98, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 225-241, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost>.

¹⁶ Eph. 5:22, The faith community I am a part of uses the New International Version of the Bible, therefore all scripture references will be taken from the Holy Bible: New International Version (North American Edition).

himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church.” (Eph. 5:25; 28-29).

So I pose the question, “How then can a man, who professes love of God and self, brutally beat, maim, and sometimes even kill his wife who is a part of himself?” If the man is a Christian, then he is certainly not living his life by the Word of God. As for the woman’s faith I would say it is misguided and misunderstood. I firmly believe it is the responsibility of the local church to educate men and women on the proper way God intended them to live together in this world. A woman’s faith should be such that she could remove herself from dangerous situations, and not be judged, even if they occur within the bounds of holy matrimony. You are a Christian woman, a woman of faith who has been abused by a member of your family. Your family may be traditional or nontraditional. Whatever form your family takes, you face all the problems of dealing with the abuse and its impact on you and your children. But you also face the possibility that your church does not understand or want to know about your experience as a battered woman. You may feel abandoned by your church; you may feel abandoned by God.¹⁷

We have a job to do. Paul told the Galatians, “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” This was, Paul said, “the law of Christ.” The weak and powerless are among us – sometimes just in the next pew. Some are so cowed by the hand of the wicked that they don’t know how to get help. Scriptures uses the marriage relationship as a primary tutorial of Christ’s love for us. The church is the bride of Christ. This bride is not meant to be battered – neither are any of her members! If we leave victims with nowhere to escape, the serpent will sidle up to them, spreading his evil snare by saying, “You’re worthless. You’re worthless.” “No,” the church replies. “You are

¹⁷ Marie Fortune, *Keeping the Faith: Guidance for Christian Women Facing Abuse* (New York: Harper Collins, 1987) 5.

created in the image of God. You deserve our care and protection.”¹⁸ During the early years of my childhood I witnessed domestic violence among family members, friends and neighbors. Today as a woman in ministry I would feel accountable if I knew of a domestic violence case, in or out of the church, and did nothing to help the parties involved.

Part of my responsibility is to do those things Christ spoke about in Luke 4:18; it states that Christ was sent to preach the gospel to the poor; should not the battered woman be considered poor in spirit, and may even be economically poor? He was sent to heal the brokenhearted. Would not all of us agree that a woman, who is constantly beaten by a man, is a person with a broken heart? I would like to think that these women, as little girls, dreamed of their own knight in shining armor who would one day come and marry her and help her live happily ever after.

Then we are commanded to proclaim freedom for the prisoners; certainly women who are systematically abused by the men in their lives are prisoners. They are physically held prisoners when he will not allow them to leave home without permission, or go to work unless he says so. They are financially imprisoned when the abuser refuses to give them money, or allow them to spend their own money unless he first knows what the purchases are to be. The women are emotionally and mentally held in prison by the negative things said to them day after day. The recovering of sight for the blind is another work ministers are to be doing. It is difficult to understand, but there are some abused women who are indeed psychologically “blind” to what is happening in their lives. Somehow, everyone in their world can see what the men are doing to them except the women themselves. Finally, the minister of God is to use his/her God-given power to release the oppressed. Oppression to me is any state in which one is not allowed to live

¹⁸ Janice Shaw Crouse, “Facing an Unwelcome Truth,” *Christianity Today* 49, no. 10 (October): 87. <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost>.

to one's full, God-given potential. Women are oppressed when they cannot go to school, spend time with family and friends, or attend church and/or other cultural functions.

No one wants to deliberately break up families and homes. But there comes a time when someone has to step in and free those who are bound. It is not enough to say that we empathize or sympathize with a woman who is living a fearful life because of the man in her life. I don't believe God wants us to simply turn our heads when we see this behavior or turn up the volume on our television sets when we hear what's happening next door. Many Christian congregations do little to alleviate the sufferings of abused family members. They must remember that the abuser also is harmed by their inaction. That, in and of itself, should constitute a call to Christian action. Allowing an offender to perpetuate the sin can only further harm him or her. The Bible tells us to correct those who are in error and restore them to God's ways (Gal. 6:1).¹⁹ I am not asking anyone to put their own life in danger by physically intervening, but there are other things we can do such as notifying the authorities of the trouble while it is occurring.

Jesus gave us what has been termed the "Great Commission" or "Mission" in Matt. 28. In it He said that we should go, and we should teach those things that had been commanded by Him. I have to wonder, what then becomes the actual mission of the church today if we close our eyes to the plight of the battered woman? How dare we leave home to go on a foreign mission field when we cannot honestly deal with the downtrodden right in our faces?

As has been rightly said, movements of oppressed peoples for justice and dignity are a spiritual necessity of our times. Why then is the church not a fore-runner in challenging all the forces that hold women ransom to a violent and ruthless world? Why has the theology of the

¹⁹ Catherine Clark-Kroege and Nancy Nason-Clark, *No Place For Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001) 80-81.

church been virtually silent on this issue? Why has the church in many instances condoned sexual harassment and even violence in its own institutional life? These are the questions women are asking as we call on the church to respond with resolute action.²⁰ Certainly women in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world are being abused daily and they do need help, however our hand should first be extended to those who belong to the family of believers as described in Galatians 6:10.

It seems to me that the church of Jesus Christ should be first in line to offer this assistance. Remember, we are to be concerned about and deal with the *entire* person, not just the spiritual side. I am afraid that the people of the Harlem community, while still attending church, aren't doing so in previous numbers. The church's job is to figure out what is needed to once again draw the straying ones back into the fold. Before we can present any program or ministry to deal with domestic violence within the church, we need to first regain the confidence of the people. A woman has to be assured of confidentiality, that she will not be judged, and that she will be believed by those to whom she turns for help. The church, in a universal sense, has lost its role as the hospital, social welfare agency, home to the homeless, soup kitchen for the hungry, and hope for the desperate and hurting souls of our community.²¹

In Biblical days women were seen as worthless if they did not bring forth children (especially sons) and raised them for their husbands. Scripture provides several incidents in which women are emotionally, mentally, physically and sexually taken advantage of by the men in their lives. The average Christian in all probability would not agree with me, however, I

²⁰ Aruna Gnanadason, *No Longer a Secret: The Church and Violence Against Women* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1993), 61.

²¹ Rod Buxton, "Domestic Violence in the Church: "There is an Elephant in the Sanctuary and No One is Talking About It," *Didaskalia* 12, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 51-75.

submit that there are several instances of domestic violence recorded in the Holy Bible. The first text I looked at is II Samuel 13:1-4. This text allows us to peer into the lives of several of King David's children and see how they became embroiled in deceit, lying and even murder as a result of a domestic violence situation. Although this particular incident takes place between a brother and sister, it is domestic violence nonetheless (**See Appendix S**).

Another Biblical text I studied was Genesis 34:1-7. Israel's patriarch Jacob and his wife Leah were the parents of six of the sons who would become the twelve tribes of Israel. But unbeknownst to many people they also had a daughter named Dinah, born after her brothers. Dinah, according to the scriptures, was a beautiful young virgin who one day caught the eye of a young man who desired her hand in marriage. However, this young man seemed to put the cart in front of the horse. By that I mean instead of going to ask for her first, he allowed his lustful spirit to control him and decided to rape Dinah. I am appalled that this young woman was not better protected from the predatory nature of Shechem. And even after the crime takes place, her father Jacob did not exhibit the outrage one would expect of a father whose only daughter had been violently raped and left to bear the shame (**See Appendix U**).

Likewise, Judges 19 tells the story of the concubine, a woman who wasn't even named in scripture. Through no fault of hers she is forced into being raped and sodomized all night by men who really wanted to have sex with her man, but he protected himself inside the house while pushing her outside. The next morning when she is finally let go and finds her way back to the home where he was, this man, this Levite, this supposed man of God, stepped over her prostrate body as it laid on the doorstep, told her to "get up and let's go." This woman was not able to answer because her life had already seeped out of her body as a result of the abuse she had suffered during the night (**See Appendix T**). The Bible, which is read and revered by the

Church, becomes part and parcel in consenting to the silence in the ill treatment of these and other women.

In Genesis chapter 16 we see the plight of a slave woman named Hagar. Because of her station in life she had no control over what happened to her. She had been forced to conceive and bring forth a child, because the people who owned her desired it. Once the child was born this woman faced such cruelty and hatred that she was literally driven out of the place where she lived (**See Appendix V**).

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL JUSTICE

It is a known fact that domestic violence is, and has been a social problem for many thousands of years. It is not something that just began in the twentieth or twenty first centuries. The question of intimate violence has been ignored, then acknowledged, talked about, looked at and researched by many people. But not nearly enough has been done to secure the rights of women who are physically and otherwise abused by the intimate partners in their lives.

This type of behavior has to be seen for what it is, a crime that must be appropriately dealt with so that justice can be had for these victims the same as it is for victims of any other crime. Violence against women or children paralyzes thought and so threatens capacity to deliberate on a course of action or to imagine alternative futures. It mutes speech and so perpetuates the conspiracy of silence that has left victims without recourse to help and healing – or justice.²²

The church community has to be made to understand that this is a social ill that threatens the very fabric of community, family, justice and love. Women, whether in or outside of marriage have a God-given right to live the best life possible. If a man went to his place of business and assaulted a co-worker he would probably be arrested and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Yet this is not the case when the hurt is perpetrated against one's own family member.

²² Lois Gehr Livezey, "Sexual and Family Violence: A Growing Issue for the Churches," *The Christian Century* 104 no. 31: 938-942. <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost>.

People have used the words of the Bible to “*prove*” that men have the right to beat and otherwise abuse the women in their lives. If a man beats his male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies as a direct result, he must be punished, but he is not to be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two, since the slave is his property (Exodus 21:20). This ought not to be so. I believe God’s Word has a lot to say against doing violence. God’s purpose is to give deliverance from violence in the lives to people. You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth may terrify no more (Psalm 10:17-18).

The God that I serve is a God of justice for all people. The Lord has a heart of compassion for those who are hurt in any way. When Jesus Christ walked the earth He was always concerned about justice for those who seemingly did not have it. People who had been taken advantage of by those with more tangible means came to His attention. Those who lived on the fringes of life and the margins of society were the ones Jesus came to save and set free. His ministry was one of social justice for the depressed, oppressed and suppressed of the land.

It is imperative that the church become involved in this critical area of human need if it is serious about its concern for human justice. The involvement of the church in the issue of domestic violence can be expressed on several levels. First of all, those individuals in the midst of situations of domestic violence are in need of the care of the church. As part of their experience, they are dealing with questions of their own self-worth and their own faith.....In addition, the church is obligated to be vociferous in its witness to the larger culture regarding the problem of domestic violence. This is especially true in these days of the “pro-family” outcries

of the Moral Majority who support such outrageous legislation as the Family Protection Act which would forbid any intrusion by the state into abusive family situations.²³

In today's society we raise the banner and hear the clarion call for everything from gay rights and same sex marriage to PETA condemning others for making coats out of fur. But what about the rights of abused women? I see no marches in the streets; I hear no television shows playing out the drama in their lives and denouncing it. We only hear about domestic violence when it happens to people of celebrity; when we're told that Dominic Carter has lost his job with a particular television network and may in fact spend two years in jail for hitting his wife, then we take notice. I know that God loves abused women, but we (society) also need to love and protect our sisters. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on his in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them (Psalm 145:17-19).

Many of the social justice issues of our time were fueled by the faith community. The churches were in the forefront of the civil rights movement and this issue should be no different. Pastors especially must speak about domestic violence from pulpits; it must be taught about in our Bible studies and prayed about in our prayer meetings. We absolutely cannot take an attitude of "It's not my problem, so I don't care." Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock (Ezekiel 34:7-10).

²³ Lib McGregor Simmons, "Domestic Violence," *Journal for Preachers* 5, no. 1 (Advent 1981), 31-32. <http://web.ebscohost.com>.

In all fairness I don't want to give the impression that *no one* is taking on the plight of abused women; that's simply not so. The Verizon Corporation has been in the forefront by creating HOPELINE in 1999. It was first established in New York City then successfully expanded to the rest of the nation. HOPELINE is a cell phone recycling program, and its importance becomes clear once you understand that nearly half of all women murdered in the city are killed by their intimate partners. Commissioner Yolanda Jimenez of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence states that it provides a simple and concrete way for people to help. In New York Verizon Wireless has donated \$1 million in products, services and cash grants since 2001, including more than \$150,000 to the New York City Family Justice Center Initiative.²⁴

This is how HOPELINE works: People are asked to take their old phones – regardless of service provider, make, model or technology – to any Verizon store nationwide. Those that can be refurbished are resold, and those without value are disposed of in an environmentally sound way. The proceeds from the donated phone sales are used to provide cell phones, free minutes and cash grants to local shelters and nonprofit groups that focus on domestic violence prevention and awareness. There are other companies doing similar work as Verizon in helping to stop the spread and occurrence of domestic violence.

In addition to the work they are doing with cell phones Verizon has also launched a workplace poster campaign. These posters are designed to speak to three audiences:

Corporate leaders – stressing that domestic violence undoubtedly affects the business and encourages them to prepare their workplace to help those in abusive relationships.

²⁴ Albor Ruiz, "Fight Domestic Abuse With Your Old Cell Phone," *New York Daily News*, 25 January 2009, Metro News Section, p. 30.

Co-workers – urges colleagues to help victims of domestic violence get the assistance they need.

Victims – assuring that their company will support them in getting help.

According to the Family Violence Prevention Fund, nearly one-third of American women report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. Thirty-seven percent of women who experience domestic violence say that the abuse had an impact on their work performance.²⁵ Organizations in the Philadelphia area who committed to using the posters are Hercules, Inc. (Wilmington, Del.), First Union (Philadelphia, Pa.), McNeil Consumer Healthcare (Fort Washington, Pa.), YWCAs throughout Pennsylvania, St. Francis Hospital (Wilmington, Del.), AstraZeneca (Wilmington, Del.), South Jersey Gas Company (Folsom, N.J.), Trump Taj Mahal & Trump Marina (Atlantic City, N.J.), Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (Philadelphia, Pa.), Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Community Services (Philadelphia, Pa.), and the Jewish Employment and Vocational Services (JEVS) (Philadelphia, Pa.). They will all use the posters created by the Family Violence Prevention Fund and Verizon Wireless to raise awareness within their organizations of domestic violence. Verizon worked with its advertising agency Bozell New York to design the posters, funded the costs of photography and production and supplied them to employers for a nominal fee.

The Cincinnati Bengals football franchise has taken a stand against domestic violence. They have teamed up with Motorola and the Wireless Foundation to conduct old phone collections similar to Verizon. Over thirty NFL teams have hosted a collection day at their home stadiums. With the help of a majority of the NFL teams and the Donate a Phone program, thousands of domestic violence victims will be able to regain their freedom, said Rita Smith,

²⁵ Author/s, "Verizon Wireless Supports Ongoing Commitment to Domestic Violence With Launch of Workplace Poster Campaign," *PR Newswire*, (Oct. 3, 2000), <http://www.findarticles.com>.

Executive Director of the NCADV. “Not only will women in domestic violence situations be helped, but the public will be educated on the issue of domestic violence and learn how they can help.”²⁶

Other companies fighting against domestic violence include the Phillip Morris Companies, Inc. which began in 1999 by giving \$2 million in grants to 180 local organizations across the United States for the Doors of Hope Initiative, which supports food and meal provisions as well as emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling and outreach and training efforts for domestic violence organizations nationwide. Some of the grant recipients were:

Jewish family & Career Service, Atlanta, Ga. - \$15,000 grant to support the Peace in Home project as well as a community-wide conference, education and training for Atlanta’s Jewish community.

Greene County Domestic Violence Project, Xenia, OH – a \$50,000 grant to construct a domestic violence shelter and center for family services.

New Beginnings for Battered Women and Their Children, Seattle, WA – a \$10,000 grant to stock the food pantry with fresh foods for transitional housing residents.

“The Philip Morris family of companies has a deeply held and personal commitment to help in the fight against domestic violence,” said Tim Sompolski, Senior Vice President, Human Resources and Administration, Philip Morris Companies Inc. “Domestic violence has a

²⁶ Author/s, “Cincinnati Bengals Take Part in National Wireless Phone Collection Campaign to Aid Domestic Violence Victims,” *PR Newswire*, (Oct. 16, 2001), <http://www.findarticles.com>.

devastating impact on millions of women each year and is a crisis that occurs at home, at work, without regard to social or economic barriers.”²⁷

The CIGNA Corporation also began an initiative to raise public awareness of domestic violence by presenting a multi-city performance entitled “LOVE SHOULDN’T HURT.”

According to the National Institute for Justice, domestic violence cost Americans \$67 billion from 1987 to 1990, in terms of medical expenses, lost wages, sick leave, absenteeism and non-productivity. It’s estimated that every 18 seconds a woman experiences partner violence, and four women are beaten to death every day,” said Woodie Wright, vice president of CIGNA’s Contributions and Civic Affairs. He said that although both partners can be victims of domestic violence, CIGNA, through its nationwide health care operations, is particularly sensitive to injuries to women caused by abuse.²⁸

Right here in New York City other companies have also stepped in to help women and men caught up in the domestic abuse cycle. B. Smith’s Restaurant hosted an Evening For a Cause, on April 13, 2009 featuring NYC Coalition On Working With Abusive Partners (CoWAP). It was entitled, One Size Does Not Fit All: Exploring Diverse Approaches to Working With Abusive Partners, and 20% of the proceeds from the evening were donated toward a conference that was scheduled to be held at Cardozo School of Law in June (**SEE APPENDIX K**).

One company that I am especially happy to see taking on this fight is AVON, The Company For Women. Because I and many of my friends spend a lot of money on AVON

²⁷ Author/s, “Philip Morris Companies inc. Awards \$2 Million to Help Victims of Domestic Violence,” *PR Newswire*, (Oct. 4, 1999), <http://www.findarticles.com>

²⁸ Author/s, “CIGNA’s Love Shouldn’t Hurt Initiative,” *PR Newswire*, (Dec. 2, 1999), <http://www.findarticles.com>.

products, I am encouraged to continue doing so when I see their commitment to stopping the violence against women. In December 2009, the actress Reese Witherspoon spoke at a press conference in London's House of Commons, encouraging a campaign against domestic violence **(SEE APPENDIX I).**

One young woman who is doing something on her own is singer/songwriter Shirley Murdock, who recently released a song, entitled "I Love Me Better Than That." **(SEE APPENDIX E)** Although she states that she has never been abused, she wrote this song as a tribute and a message to women who have been and are being abused. The song was birthed because I get to minister in the women's prison system and I have had the awesome opportunity to minister at a lot of women's conferences. Life has dealt many of us a jacked-up hand. Sometimes, we've dealt ourselves a jacked-up hand based on decisions we've made. For all other women who are struggling to overcome the adversities of abuse, Murdock closed: Not only should you love yourself better than whatever "that" is, but you have to understand you have to reclaim your power and take it all back because you love you. And if you don't love you, you are flushing your life, hopes, dreams, self esteem and joy down the crapper – and you're better than that!"²⁹

There are many more corporations and agencies where awareness of domestic violence is being raised and solutions are being birthed. I pointed out these companies to show that many in our country are doing their part, however, the church (faith communities) is not doing nearly enough. It's understood that houses of worship don't have the financial resources as those corporations I've written about but the things we can do, seemingly aren't being done. The

²⁹ <http://webmail.aol.com/42402>

church has been mandated by God to nurture and care for the downtrodden and it must be on the front line of stopping abuse against women.

Because of the nature of my project I am sensitive to, and empathize with, the survivors of domestic violence which is social injustice on a major scale, since more women die each year as a result of this behavior than in any other way. As a minister I need to be in the forefront of seeking social change in every area of life for my community and the people I serve, but especially where domestic violence is concerned.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY – OR, HOW ARE YOU GONNA DO THAT?

At the start of this project I began thinking what it was about domestic/intimate violence I wanted to convey to the world. After much prayer and soul searching I came up with three goals I wanted to attain. My first goal was to raise the awareness of the church and community to the problem. My second goal was to establish a ministry team of individuals at St. Paul Baptist Church who will be advocates for women in crisis. The third and final goal was to create resources for domestic violence advocacy. For too long people have pretended that women are not being beaten and otherwise abused by the men in their lives who are intimate partners.

The Church needs to be shaken out of her lethargy because many of these abused women sit in the pews each worship day. I totally understand why there has been such resistance in the church to tackling this problem, but we've got to come out of our comfort zone. Our sisters are dying each day and pastors must allow themselves to be educated about this issue of domestic violence. So, my dilemma was how to get people of St. Paul to open up and share with me the information I was seeking. Because I needed to know what they did or did not know, I decided to hand out a survey containing twelve questions or statements about domestic violence (**SEE APPENDIX J**).

This was accomplished on Sunday, December 7, 2008. The demographics of the congregation were as follows: Men, women and teens. At first I did not think it was a good idea to have the teenagers complete one but Dr. Battle believed it was an excellent idea, so they

filled out surveys as well. Our children's church was being held in the lower sanctuary and they were too young to participate, however, I did have some surveys sent to the adults who were ministering to the children. Afterwards I realized the wisdom in that because so many teenage girls are being abused or will be abused by boyfriends, and won't even know it's happening. There was a wide range of ages in both genders. As stated earlier St. Paul has a large elder population and I especially wanted them to take part in the survey because oftentimes older people won't discuss such issues.

Another interesting aspect of the day was the fact that we also had visitors from other countries who were eager to join us in taking the survey. After they were collected several of them came up to ask me about the project and why I chose such a topic. Two of the women told me a little bit about the laws in their country and wished me well on completing my D.Min.

The third activity I chose to bring awareness to St. Paul and the community was conducting a seminar (**SEE APPENDIX B**). During several meetings with my site team every detail was planned. We decided on a color scheme of purple and flyers were printed up on purple paper and sent to surrounding churches. I went to a printer and had tickets made up with the slogan 'LOVE DOES NOT HURT!' inscribed across the top, with all pertinent information following. It was held at St. Paul on Saturday, April 25, 2009, the same day that Joel Olsteen packed out the new Yankee Stadium, no doubt taking some of the church people who should have been at my seminar. In any case those who were supposed to be there did show up. The \$15.00 ticket included registration, materials in a folder, continental breakfast and lunch.

I had invited from the community three speakers who were knowledgeable in the area of domestic violence. First was Ms. Maria Santiago of CONNECT, a family violence prevention program in New York City (**SEE APPENDIX P & Q**). We spoke by telephone and she sent a short bio outlining her work in helping over 50 child welfare organizations keep mothers and children safe while taking steps to hold abusive partners accountable for their actions. I found Ms. Santiago to be a very passionate advocate who believes it will take every one of us working together to end violence in our families and communities.

Another person who presented at the seminar was Rev. Alvina Nadira Smith, a Muslim woman who is a Ph.D candidate in Clinical Psychology. From 1998 to 2001 she worked with the Mt. Sinai Medical Center counseling women in their Survivors of Intimate Violence Program. I was very interested in what she had to share with us because the Muslim lifestyle is so different from the Christian one. She had great knowledge of the Koran and the laws of Islam. She has worked with survivors of domestic violence for many years and continues to do so in several venues.

Our final speaker was The Rev. Alphonso Wyatt, Vice President of The Fund For The City of New York. Rev. Wyatt is certainly no stranger to NYTS, nor was he to a lot of the people present. It was refreshing to hear from a man's perspective, why domestic violence is wrong. Rev. Wyatt has worked in many community organizations helping families cope with their problems and he did not disappoint us as he talked about the ungodly behavior of men who beat women. He was forthcoming with information and wisdom on this issue.

We also had several music and rap CD's from the organization "A Call to Men" that were softly played continuously throughout the day as background music to keep the message coming

that abuse is not okay. They also sent a few videos depicting men talking with, and holding other men accountable for their actions. One of the things I like about this organization is the fact that they believe **ALL** men must help to stop domestic violence whether he is an abuser or not. They have stated that if a man stands by and does nothing, he is just as guilty as the perpetrator for allowing the behavior to continue. These materials really brought the problem to the forefront (**SEE APPENDIX L & M**).

In the same vein of bringing awareness to the community, I decided to preach a series of sermons at St. Paul on domestic violence as found in the Bible (**SEE APPENDIX R**). Pastor Battle requested in March 2009 that I conduct a Bible study on the topic, which I did on Tuesday the 17th. Many members of the congregation came out, not really knowing what to expect but it turned out to be a great learning experience for all of us.

My **SECOND GOAL** of establishing the ministry team has been met only in part. To date two persons have agreed to be a part of the team to advocate for women in crisis. Because the issue of domestic violence is such an important one I need to make absolutely certain that the criteria and the orientation training are properly done. What I would like to do is have a representative from the Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence or one of the community organizations such as CONNECT to actually do the training for our group so we will know that we have been properly trained.

The **THIRD AND FINAL GOAL** has also been completed in part. It was to create resources for domestic violence advocacy. I have created the information display in the lobby of St. Paul. There is a table on which I have placed brochures, pamphlets and fact sheets reference to domestic violence. I intend to continue work on the resource package that will eventually be

used by the advocacy team. In addition to the resource package, an information pamphlet will be created. This document will include personal information about the advocacy team, such as name, contact numbers and a brief profile. It's important that the women who need the services of the advocacy team know that they can contact a live person at any hour of the day who will be available to talk with them and offer assistance.

ANALYSIS OF DATA – OR WHAT HAPPENED?

EVALUATION OF GOAL 1

Bringing awareness to the St. Paul Baptist Church and the surrounding community did indeed happen with the methods I used; surveys, sermons, Bible study seminar and one on one sharing. Our congregation has known from the start of my D.Min. what my project would be and they were eager to assist and have a part in its success. There are many more ways to shed light on domestic violence, however what I have set forth has made a difference based on the responses I have received through e-mails, telephone calls and face to face conversations.

The next way in which I reached this first goal was to preach a series of sermons at St. Paul Baptist Church on domestic violence as found in the Holy Bible. When I began the first sermon in January 2009 I noticed a look of shock on some of the faces as I spoke. I'm sure they had never heard the words "Holy Bible" and "domestic violence" in the same sentence. However as I continued preaching I began to see myriad facial expressions, ranging from embarrassment to yes, I see what you're saying. Following that sermon many members of the

congregation came up and asked me when I would be doing the next one. The next two sermons and the Bible study which were subsequently done were received with great enthusiasm and interest.

The third item under goal 1 was completed in April 2009. On Saturday the 25th I sponsored a seminar at the St. Paul church (**SEE APPENDIX N**). I had invited three speakers (1 Hispanic Catholic woman, 1 African American Muslim woman, and 1 African American man). All of these people gave powerful delivery on the topic of domestic violence, after which another 1 ½ hours were spent in great dialogue with seminar participants. I had also set up a screen on which I was prepared to show the movie “The Burning Bed,” however the conversations were so rich and powerful that the opportunity did not present itself. Before leaving everyone was asked to spend a few minutes filling out a closing evaluation form for the seminar; the goal was to see if anything had changed, or was learned from the day (**SEE APPENDIX D**). The problem of domestic violence was certainly brought to the awareness of the St. Paul congregation and some community members, thereby allowing me to meet my first goal.

EVALUATION OF GOAL 2

My second goal was to establish a team of people at the St. Paul Baptist Church who would be available to advocate for women in crisis. To that end, I have spoken confidentially with two people, both survivors of domestic violence, who are willing to be part of a ministry/advocacy team. The team criteria and orientation training have not been done to date, however work on these documents will be completed shortly.

In the interim one woman has confided in me about the abuse taking place in her marriage. I must say I was surprised when she contacted me, but these are exactly the kind of people I'm talking about, those who seemingly have it all together. After many hours of sharing with and listening to this person, she made a decision to leave the marital home and get her own apartment. I am happy to say that she appears to be more at peace than she had been in a very long time. Since her decision, I make it a point to call regularly just to give a word of encouragement.

EVALUATION OF GOAL 3

Creating resources for victims of domestic violence is another goal which was set forth when I chose this project. Toward that end, Pastor Battle has permitted me to place a table in the lobby of St. Paul, on which resource materials can be found. I have explained in our church bulletin why these materials are present and encourage worshipers to avail themselves of them (**SEE APPENDIX W**). The Advocacy Team Resource Package and the Ministry Team Information Pamphlet will be completed at a later date. Overall I feel the goals I have set forth have been and continue to be met to a large degree.

CHAPTER 6

MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

After meeting with my site team we agreed upon the following three competencies for further development:

#6 RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR.

It was determined very early in my Christian walk and spiritual development that I had been blessed by the Lord with the gift of teaching as outlined in Ephesians chapter 4. Since 1982 I have taught many different Bible studies, from pre-school aged to married women's classes, and combined Adult Sunday School. In my former church I served for a period of two years as Chancellor and Teacher of the Bible School that had been instituted at the church. Classes were attended by members of my own church, including deacons, elders and ministers, as well as pastors of other churches, along with their wives and members of other churches.

Also at that same church a Christian school to Educate children was started and I was the sole teacher of the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes for a period of three years. I am convinced that God gave me the ability to interact with, and reach the minds of young children as well as adults. In 1985 the pastor of my former church decided we should have teaching going on in our homes as well as in the church. Members were assigned to various homes for study and I was one of the people chosen as a teacher. Each week, six to ten women from the church would come to my home to be taught the Bible. We would have 1 ½ - 2 hours of study followed by a light meal and time of fellowship. These times of teaching were also times of learning for

me and really served to further confirm what I already knew, that God had blessed me with the gift of Teacher.

Since becoming a member of the St. Paul Baptist Church I have continued to attend every kind of study that's been made available, such as Bible study, church school, etc. My study of God's Word has become even greater with the coming of Rev. Dr. Battle as our pastor. One of the main tenets of his ministry has been teaching the membership. I just believe that one cannot become a teacher of excellence unless and until one is an excellent student; what I mean is that one must be consistent in study. That's why I have availed myself of all the different biblical studies Dr. Battle has introduced to us since his arrival.

He immediately began with the St. Paul Leadership Academy which met every Saturday morning for a period of six months. These were classes that were initially geared toward those in leadership (ministers, deacons, trustees, etc). After several months Pastor Battle invited the entire church to join us. There have been several other specialized teaching sessions from our pastor which I know have caused me to examine my own teaching abilities on a much deeper level.

The reason my site team and I chose this competency as one for further development is because I have a burning desire to learn more about the history of the Church. I had a conversation a few years ago with Dr. Dale Irvin in which I mentioned to him that I would eventually like to teach the discipline of Church History at the college or graduate school level. It's wonderful that I aspire to teach the aforementioned topic but I also realize I need to teach more than the Bible and all things religious; what's needed even more than that is the teaching about domestic violence. Victims, abusers and the public all need to be re-educated on what this term really mean. The church has a duty to tell the survivors story. Domestic violence is the

number one health threat to women and accounts for more deaths than automobile accidents, muggings, and rapes combined. Survivors of domestic violence are valiant women not only because they have broken free from literally being beaten down but also because they call the church to create realities where domestic violence will not happen. Survivors' stories are little known.³⁰

Since beginning this doctoral degree my skills as a religious educator have been enhanced greatly. I continued to teach regularly in my church setting as well as in other settings. During the Spring 2009 semester I was asked by NYTS to complete the final four weeks of classes for Students in the Certificate Program taking the Introduction to Preaching class. By doing this class I have grown even more, have gained more confidence and expect to continue learning so I can continue giving back. The second competency chosen was:

#7 COUNSELOR.

This demonstration project, if done correctly, will help me to properly counsel not only those who are survivors of abuse, but other community members as well. Over the years people have commented that after speaking with me on life issues they felt better and had an idea of how to proceed to a solution for their particular situation. Since Dr. Battle became St. Paul's pastor I have been appointed Minister of Congregational Care and Evangelism. This position has allowed me the privilege of interacting on a more personal level with each congregant. They have welcomed the opportunity to have someone who will listen to them and give good biblical counsel. When and if a situation comes up that I don't feel competent to handle I always refer

³⁰ Carol J. Schlueter, "Creating a New Reality: No More Domestic Violence," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 23, no. 4 (Aug. 1999): 254-264, <http://web.Ebscohost.com/ehost>.

the person to our pastor. Religious leaders are recognized helpers, champions of the home and domestic harmony, as well as counselors and confidants. Although some may see the rise of professional psychologists as a dilution of the influence of clergy as counselor, studies show that parishioners seek out their religious leaders for help with personal and family problems. People prefer pastoral counseling primarily because of the religious values possessed by clergy.³¹

Another venue which affords me ample opportunities for counseling is my vocation as a Chaplain with the New York State Department of Corrections. Since starting this degree 2 ½ years ago I have counseled hundreds of men and women who are incarcerated. Sometimes it's informal meetings in the hall or in their housing units, other times they actually have officers call my office for appointments. People come to me with any number of problems from relationship issues to not being able to get over the death of a parent.

I have found that it's important while doing any kind of counseling in a state prison, to remain as free and as honest as possible. The inmate population is one that's dealing with myriad problems and a good counselor should be able to hear what's being said (which usually is not what's coming out of the mouth) and create a relationship that helps the person realize their own solutions. As a state chaplain I don't just counsel inmates but civilian staff members and officers as well. I have had people come to talk with me about child custody cases, marriage problems, sicknesses and religious issues. I feel honored that people are comfortable enough to come and share their innermost secrets with me, but more importantly, that God allows me the ability to listen and offer the appropriate responses.

³¹ Barbara A. Anderson, "Women Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence: Effects of Confiding in Religious Leaders," *Pastoral Psychology* 55, no. 6 (July 2007): 773-787.

While my undergraduate degree was in psychology and I have taken several pastoral care courses, I am not a trained counselor and do realize there comes a period in which referral is the only answer to some counseling situations. This is an area where I believe every minister can benefit from ongoing education which is why we have decided on this competency for further development. I plan to attend classes and seminars after completion of this D.Min. Program so my counseling skills might be improved upon. The third and final competency we looked at was:

#10 ECUMENIST

Before beginning my studies at NYTS I encountered people of different faith communities, and felt that I appreciated their cultural and religious differences. However, because I have had limited opportunity to worship with other denominations and religious traditions, I feel like I really don't know nearly enough about how they worship and think about God. I have a willingness and desire to learn from other faith traditions, even though my conversion experience, and subsequent growth with my Savior, causes me to admit that I find it a little bit difficult to embrace some of what I have heard from other camps. I understand that every person has a right to believe what they want, but then I think about the Great Commission from Jesus in Matthew 28. What do I do with that?

What I do is: I realize that Jesus is so much greater than what I have perceived Him to be. I have limited Him in His ability to reach those who needed to be reached only in the ways that I know about. Scripture tells us that God's ways are past finding out." Working in a prison setting has afforded me the opportunity to meet people from just about every faith, which is developing me as an ecumenist. While I believe what the Bible says about Jesus being the way

to God and heaven, I also now believe that God will do what God chooses, and there are unlimited things we are not able to comprehend about the workings of God.

I am grateful for the opportunity of sharing in the faith of others in a non-judgmental way; I can only believe that this competency will develop more as I grow in my own faith. One of the major portions of my project was the Domestic Violence Seminar. On that day there were speakers from denominations/faith communities different from my own. As they talked about domestic violence from their own perspective my eyes were opened and I challenged myself to learn more about what they believe. I have asked God to help me not be so rigid that I cannot listen to and appreciate what others have to say, it takes nothing away from me, but serves to enhance my own faith.

I have talked with Catholic women, Jewish women, and Muslim women regarding this problem of domestic violence and all of them believe as I do, that it will take all communities of faith working together to stamp out this tragic behavior towards women. The people of St. Paul who attended the seminar also commented that they were enlightened to hear about how Muslim women are *supposed* to be treated according to the Koran. Many of them, like me, always believed these women had no voice and simply lived their lives as doormats for their husbands; nothing could be further from the truth. The Muslim sister who spoke on that day really enlightened all of us and dispelled many untrue popular beliefs about her faith.

On Saturday October 31, 2009 I sat on a panel at The Second Providence Baptist Church in Harlem. It was sponsored by the church's Community Health and Awareness Ministry & The Beatitude Ministry to discuss HIV/AIDS and Domestic Violence (**SEE APPENDIX O**). Present were people of different sexual orientations and different faith communities. During the

domestic violence phase of the day I found myself listening to, and engaging people from all these backgrounds and fully agreeing with them. Though we had hailed from different parts in life, our destination was the same, to stop the violence against women. God is concerned with the well being of every person therefore every person must become an ecumenist; for none of us can do this alone.

CHAPTER 7

TRANSFORMATION

When I began this journey of pursuing a doctorate degree in ministry I believed that basically everyone knew what domestic violence was; boy was I ever wrong. During the course of the past 2 ½ years I have learned so much about myself and others. Having grown up with domestic violence as such a major part of my life, I had never given much thought to seeking assistance for the abuser. Because women I loved were being hurt all I felt was hatred for their attackers. However, doing this project has changed me to understand that the problem begins with the abuser, therefore the abuser's mindset needs to change in order for his behavior to change.

A lot of people I talked with in the beginning said that they should just be locked away in prison and never let out again, but after I preached the sermons and did the seminar, I was able to convince many of them that both parties (abused and abuser) needed help if this crime was going to stop. I know transformation has begun to take place at St. Paul because the day after I did the session on March 17, 2009 I received several emails from members who had been present; following are some of their responses:

"My Dearest Reverend Spears:

I am writing to congratulate you on your presentation last evening. You were: poised, informative, intelligent, and of course beautiful (both physically and spiritually). May God continue to bless you in all that you do."

“Reverend Spears, The bible study was wonderful last night! Thank you so much for being so real and relevant with us. Someone asked me on Sunday, when was the real bible class going to start again. I said to them that this was the real bible class. They said well the part that we were reading. So many people want to separate the bible into pieces; yesterday (bible days), Jesus (death and resurrection) and today (newspaper). They don’t see the bible being a part of their everyday lives and can relate to them in the here and now!!!”

“Hi Rev. Spears,

Just wanted to let you know your domestic violence teaching was right on time. I have never shared this with anyone else, but when I was younger I was abused and raped by someone I thought loved me. The things you said last night really began the healing process in my life all these years later. Thank you.”

Those were emails I received, but there were people who called me at home and shared their own stories of abuse. At different times in the church someone would pull me to the side and tell me what happened to them. I had explained many times that I was not seeking that kind of personal information, but some told me that it was liberating for them, and they felt compelled to speak up because I was being led to speak out. I also saw transformation from the surveys.

This random survey was conducted in two stages at two different locations over a period of twelve to fourteen months. Each survey is made up of twelve multi-part questions. The questions were designed to determine what individuals feel and know about domestic and or intimate violence. While the research does not claim to be scientific, it does reflect the attitude

of the community. This is the case since most, if not all of the respondents do reside in or near the Harlem community. Both churches where the survey was conducted are located in the Harlem community and have each earned the respect of the community by virtue of their length of service. In addition, both of the churches have contributed in positive ways to many members over the years.

A total of 104 people took part in this survey. What the results provide can be very useful and revealing. Based on the frame of the questionnaire, an overwhelming number of the respondents have concurred that domestic/intimate violence include physical, verbal, financial in some form, humiliation, over-protection, threats and intimidating or manipulative pressure. In every case over 90% of those responding have made such an indication.

Since the question under consideration is “the church’s response or lack thereof to domestic/intimate violence,” much consideration will be given to the questions that focus directly on this topic. The question, “Does the church adequately address the issue of domestic/intimate violence” 56% states the church is not adequately addressing this issue. When we combine those who think that the church is not doing a good job with those who are not sure, we realize a combined total of 80% who think that the church is asleep at the wheel on this issue.

Those who think that the church needs to hear from the pulpit on this matter are also very strong. In addition to this the number who thinks that there should be a ministry in the church to support victims of domestic violence is strong. What is also interesting is that a large percentage would support such a ministry. This information could be of great assistance to a caring community minded pastor. The survey shows that 74% think that the spiritual leader has a right to know if someone is involved in domestic/intimate violence.

Transformation is taking place because awareness in and of itself is the change; it was my main goal, to cause people to open their eyes and take a good, long, hard look at the insidious practice of domestic violence. I especially need pastors and church leaders to acknowledge the issue and speak against it from our pulpits; when this happens I will know that particular goal has been met.

Looking at this concretely I would also consider a goal met when survivors come forward and report the abuse to appropriate authorities, and when men who are abusers begin to seek help for their problems. The current silence needs to be broken in the churches of the Harlem community and the abused should be comfortable enough to seek assistance from the congregation. As a result of this project, pastors as well as lay persons will be able to recognize and safely intervene in domestic violence situations taking place in the lives of people who frequent their congregations.

My recruitment and training goals will have been met when the ministry/advocacy team has been established, but more importantly, is actually in operation within the St. Paul Baptist Church. Also, I will claim some success when a level of comfort has been achieved so that it is talked about publicly on a regular basis.

When the planned resource tools are placed in various houses of worship (not just St. Paul and other Baptist churches) in the Harlem community, I will realize a measure of success in the fight against domestic violence.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

As I researched this issue of domestic violence, one thought continued to reverberate inside my head. If since the late twentieth century, people from various factions have been working to combat and/or stop the spread of domestic violence, why does the problem remain? The answer lies in the fact that we live in a violent culture, therefore domestic violence continues to thrive. We're no longer surprised to hear about a young person shooting up their school, babysitters and parents beating babies to death or neighbors stabbing or shooting one another over a trivial matter.

While citizens from every walk of life need to assist in solving the problem, the church has to be in the forefront of the fight. Traditionally, our churches are places where we could go to find peace for our troubled lives. No matter what the problem happened to be, when in the bosom of our church family things didn't seem quite as bad. I'm not as familiar with other cultural practices, but I know that the Black church served as an extended family for the African American community.

I've seen the church bury loved ones of members who had no money, pay rent and utility bills of laid off or on-strike members, and purchase food and clothing for people. As far back as I can remember the church has been a caretaker for her people, except when it comes to the topic of domestic violence.

The main occupants of these churches are women and children. There are men who attend as well, however, it has always been the women who have been the backbone of the church. Because of the faith held in Almighty God, the women of the Harlem community also believe in the power of the pastor to solve just about any problem they may bring to the house of worship. What makes it difficult to help women sometimes is that they hold back on some truths.

I personally do not believe a lot of women would actually admit to their church leaders that they are being regularly beaten by their mate. I also believe there is a sense of shame in confiding in someone of a spiritual leader's stature, that she has been battered. However, when a woman does get enough courage to talk to her pastor or other leaders in the church, oftentimes she is not believed, especially if her abuser is a member of the same church. It's the duty of the church to rescue women from the life threatening danger of domestic violence. Our sisters need to be reassured that help and protection awaits them in the bosom of the church. There absolutely has to be a safety net that surrounds and supports those who aren't strong enough to defend and/or take care of themselves.

I'm aware that many companies are recognizing this problem of domestic violence and are taking steps to help their employees who are affected. I'm happy to see that my own place of employment, the New York State Department of Correctional Services has just last year issued a Directive outlining their stance against domestic violence in the workplace. If these places can help stop this crime for their employees, certainly the church can do the same for her parishioners. I don't understand how the Christian mission can be divided and separated into things we (ministers and leaders) will put our hands to, and things we will not touch because they are too messy.

Hospitals, law enforcement agencies, safe houses and other social service agencies are all extending a hand to first of all keep the battered woman alive long enough to make her escape and secondly, to assist her in starting a new life for herself and her children. As I've said repeatedly, it's going to take EVERYONE, people from every sector working together to abolish domestic violence against women.

At the start of this project my main goal was to bring awareness to the church community of Harlem, especially the congregation of the St. Paul Baptist Church. I believe that has taken place, but more importantly, I've become aware of some things about myself.

I'm aware that I've never fully recovered from the deaths of two women whom I loved that were murdered by men in their lives.

I'm aware that while strides have been made, this is a never-ending work that cannot be allowed to cease or slack up in the least.

And I've been made aware that this problem too, like the rest of creation, groans and waits in anticipation for the redemption that is to come.

This project has allowed me to realize both strengths and weaknesses. The strength of my work is two-fold. The power of my memories has allowed me to approach this project with more than a lukewarm fervor. It has brought to The St. Paul Church the awareness I was seeking, which eventually will branch out to the entire Harlem community. The abhorrence to domestic violence was etched on my very soul as a young child and I have never forgotten it. Even at my present age I can recall the absolute feeling of horror it brings to children. One weakness is that I know I am not nearly as equipped as I would like to be in helping to stop the crime of domestic violence. When the word "crime" is used, one automatically feel that it's a

police department issue to solve, however that agency is just one slice of the proverbial pie. Every facet of society has to step up and lend a hand to eradicate the problem.

I'm not sure where this project will lead me, but I do believe that my life will be further impacted as I grow and learn. My education must not, neither the education of others, end with this work. The Lord has allowed this problem to once more come to the forefront of my life and I feel like He has thrown down the gauntlet. The choice is now mine to pick it up and fight or to ignore it.

While this project concentrates specifically on domestic violence against women as it pertains to people in heterosexual relationships, I realize that it happens in other intimate relationships as well, and I want to say a word about those. I know that people in gay and lesbian relationships, as well as female dominated heterosexual bonds are also being abused. I wholeheartedly denounce this behavior just as I do with traditional male/female relationships. No person, no matter what the relationship should be emotionally, mentally, physically or otherwise a victim of domestic violence. As stated previously, I don't know where this work will take me, however, I pray that I can be an advocate for anyone who is a victim of violence in their relationships.

The church has put significant dents in feeding those who hunger for food, both physical and spiritual. She has also made great leaps in clothing those who are naked and in need of clothing. Now she needs to expand that assistance to the women who huddle in her breast, looking for relief from a wretched life that most of us can only guess about.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: WATER COLOR

How can I help to stop Domestic Abuse in my comm?



1. Ostrich - Men stick heads in the sand about this issue
2. Shark - predatory behavior
3. Volcanic eruption - Anger of men erupting
4. Penis - male domination of women

APPENDIX B: SEMINAR AGENDA

St. Paul Baptist Church
Domestic Violence Seminar
Love Does Not Hurt!
April 25, 2009
AGENDA

8am – 9am	Registration & Continental Breakfast
9:00am	Welcome & Statement of Purpose
9:10am	Opening Worship (includes Scripture & Prayer)
9:30am	Panel Discussion, with Q & A period
10:45am	Break
11:00am	Art Against Domestic Violence – Mr. Jeremiah Drake
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Film and Discussion
2:15pm	Rev. Dr. Alphonso Wyatt
2:55pm	Evaluations
3:00pm	Final Remarks, Adjournment & Benediction

THIS SEMINAR IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
 MRS. IDA B. GLOVER-FRANKLIN, "AUNT DAISY,"
 A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WHO LOST HER LIFE
 IN DECEMBER 1976

APPENDIX C: SEMINAR REGISTRATION FORM

St. Paul Baptist Church

249 West 123rd Street

New York, NY 10027

Rev. Dr. V. DuWayne Battle, Pastor

Rev. Linda W. Spears, M.Div., Facilitator

“LOVE DOES NOT HURT”

R E G I S T R A T I O N F O R M

Domestic Violence Seminar – April 25, 2009

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

CHURCH AFFILIATION: _____

APPENDIX D: SEMINAR CLOSING EVALUATION

St. Paul Baptist Church

April 25, 2009

LOVE DOES NOT HURT! ***DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SEMINAR*** ***CLOSING EVALUATION***

Did you learn anything about domestic violence that you did not know prior to today's seminar?

Do you feel all, some, or none of the material was helpful to you?

Do you believe seminars such as this are helpful in educating community residents about domestic violence?

Were the presenters clear and compassionate in their sharing of information?

Would you be comfortable sharing what you have experienced today, with your family, friends, and co-workers?

My site team and I would like to thank the presenters for sharing their experiences, knowledge and wisdom on faith communities and domestic violence.

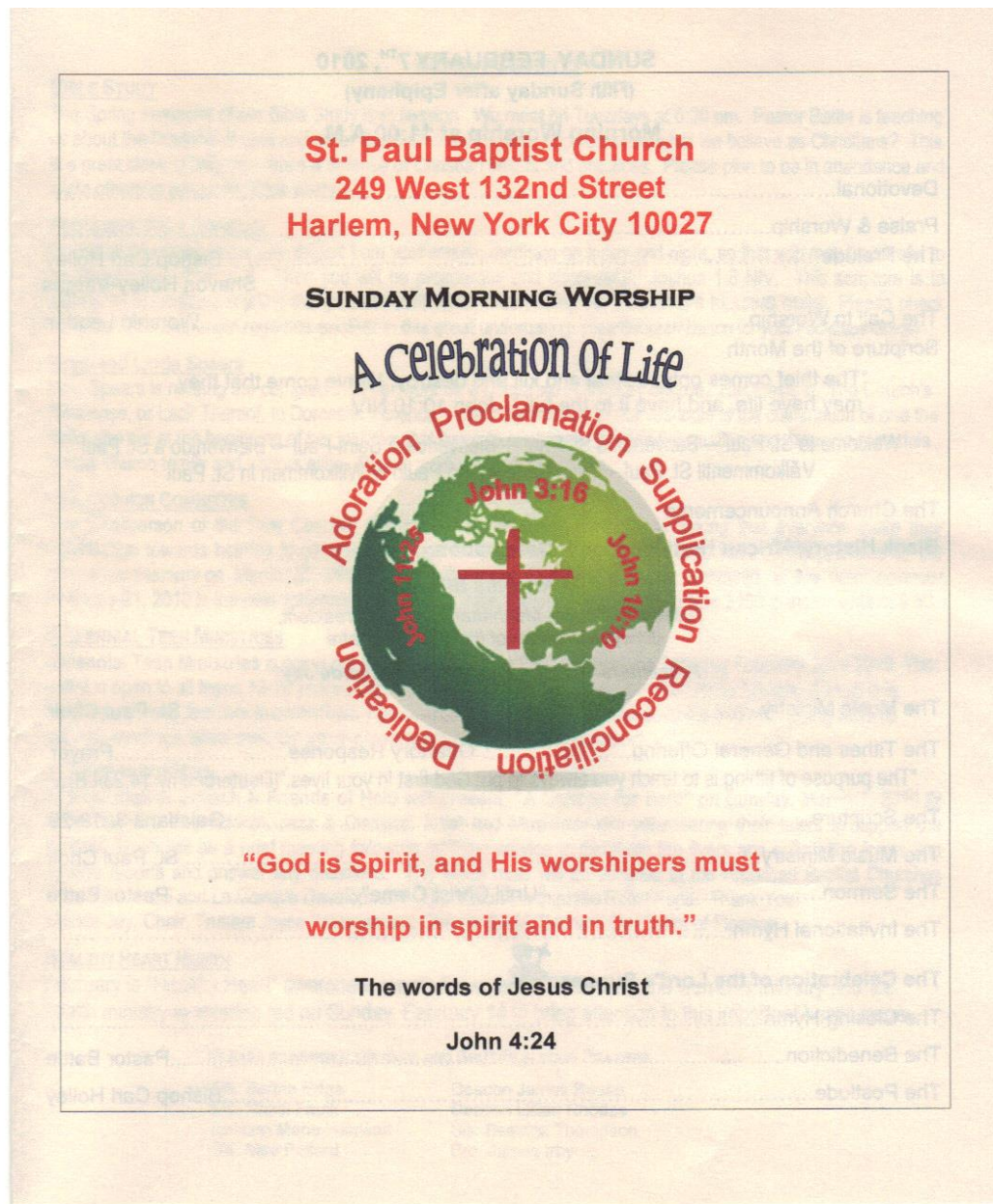
APPENDIX E: SONG, SHIRLEY MURDOCK

I LOVE ME BETTER THAN THAT

By Shirley Murdock

As I look (as I look) in the mirror
A broken woman I see
Broken down by the streets of life's journey
That broken woman is me
So I take me a little ride
Back down memory lane
Past the verbal and the physical abuse and
All the drama and the pain
I've got to flee from this crazy situation
Cause it's driving me insane
Now I'm packing up all of my broken pieces
And the little bit of strength that remains
I love me better than that

APPENDIX F: FRONT COVER OF BULLETIN



APPENDIX G: ANNOUNCEMENT PAGE OF BULLETIN

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIBLE STUDY

The Spring semester of our Bible Study is in session. We meet on Tuesdays at 6:00 pm. Pastor Battle is teaching us about the Doctrine of God and other Basic Christian Beliefs. Do you know what we believe as Christians? This is a great class to help make a defense of Christian beliefs and practices. Please plan to be in attendance and invite others to join us for Bible study

FOOTSTEPS BIBLE READERS

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Joshua 1:8 NIV. This scripture is to remind us to continue reading the greatest book ever written using our FOOTSTEPS READING GUIDE. Please check on each other and encourage one another in this great undertaking. (See Deborah Barton for your Footsteps Guide)

REVEREND LINDA SPEARS

Rev. Spears is nearing the completion of her work on a Doctorate of Ministry degree. Her thesis is "The Church's Response, or Lack Thereof, to Domestic Violence. The table you see in the vestibule is the culmination of one of the goals she set at the beginning of her journey; that being to continually provide information and resource materials for our church family and visitors alike. Please avail yourselves of them.

PEW CUSHION COMMITTEE

The Chairperson of the Pew Cushion Committee, Sister Sylvia Benjamin is asking that everyone make their contribution towards helping to get pew cushions for the sanctuary. The goal is to have these cushions by the church anniversary on March 28, 2010. Contributions can be given to Sister Benjamin at any time; however February 21, 2010 is the next scheduled contribution date. Members are asked to give \$100 in increments of \$ 50.

MILLENNIAL TEEN MINISTRIES

Millennial Teen Ministries is going out to Riverbank State Park Ice Rink on Saturday, February 20th, 2010. The event is open to all teens 13-18 years of age and the time of the event is from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. If anyone is interested please feel free to contact Sis. Pat Saunders or Bro. Courtney Jones at the end of morning worship service, and we also ask for your continued prayers and support.

HEALTHY HEART MONTH

February is "Healthy Heart", awareness month for women. Please join the women's ministry and the health ministry in wearing red on Sunday, February 14th to bring attention to this important health issue

A CONCERT FOR HAITI

St Paul Baptist Church & Friends of Haiti will present, "A Concert for Haiti" on Sunday, March 7, 2010 @ 3PM. Gospel, Inspirational, Jazz & Classical Artist and Musicians are volunteering their talent in support the concert. The funds raise will be donated to the American Baptist Churches Missions in Haiti and Le Gonave Development Corporation Earthquake Relief Fund. Thank You! Claude Jay, Chair, Trustee Joyce Freeman and Deacon Bill McEachern Co-Chairs of Finance.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE SICK AND SHUT-IN IN YOUR PRAYERS

Sis. Bertha Edge	Deacon James Reese
Sis. Hazel Faulk	Deacon Lillian Rhodes
Deacon Marie Harrison	Sis. Beatrice Thompson
Sis. Mae Pollard	Bro. James Irby

APPENDIX H: PACKING TO LEAVE AGAIN

PACKING TO LEAVE AGAIN

By Pamela Ann Kress

All up and down the block
this morning,
women are packing to leave.
Getting down the smaller suitcase,
emptying out half the closet
and the upper dresser drawers,
while their husbands sleep,
sleep it off again, spent
from the effort of keeping her in line.

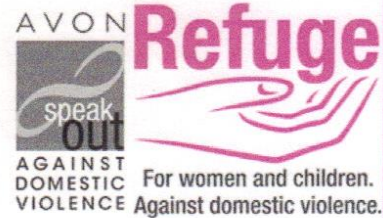
His throat will hurt when he wakes up,
though not as much as her arm
grasped too tightly, her cheek
slapped too hard,
the small of her back, those bruises
matching up to the sharp edge
of the murderous counters in the kitchen.

By noon or one o'clock, he'll have called.
placed his order for dinner,
offered his diffident apology,
slung that silken lasso out
to reel her right back in.

The half-hearted suitcases
will be unpacked by five
hope springs eternal,
dull and cruel.

All over the world this morning,
women assess the damage,
take inventory, survey
their chances of escape.
They weigh the horror of homelessness
against the hollow comforts
of this home.

APPENDIX I: AVON ARTICLE, PAGES 1 & 2



AVON GLOBAL AMBASSADOR REESE WITHERSPOON SIGNS PETITION TO CALL FOR BETTER SERVICES FOR WOMEN EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Reese Witherspoon supports Avon and Refuge's groundbreaking new campaign at the Houses of Parliament

London, December 02, 2009 /PRNewswire/ — Reese Witherspoon, Global Ambassador for Avon, headlined a press conference at the House of Commons today to promote a powerful new campaign against domestic violence. The campaign has been launched jointly by Avon Cosmetics and Refuge, the national domestic violence charity. The event saw Reese Witherspoon become the 1353rd person to sign a petition to call for more Government support for women experiencing domestic violence in the UK.

The event marks the mid-point in "16 Days of Activism" which began on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Avon and Refuge's FOUR WAYS TO SPEAK OUT campaign urges people to speak out against domestic violence in four simple ways:

- Buy and wear an Avon empowerment necklace
- Sign a petition calling for the UK Government to provide more support services for abused women and children
- Download a poster to display in your local community so that women know where to get help
- Invite your friends and family to join the campaign

A team of powerful female panellists joined Reese Witherspoon at the event. She sat alongside Anna Segatti, President of Avon UK and Sandra Horley, Chief Executive of Refuge. Baroness Helena Kennedy QC, a human rights barrister and Patron of Refuge opened the speeches for the morning and domestic violence survivor, Wendy Turner Webster, joined the panel to tell her own story. Lynda Waltho MP acted as the host.

Says Reese Witherspoon, Avon's Global Ambassador:

"Women involved in domestic violence situations often find it difficult to reach out to others for help. We can all play a role in bringing this issue to light and breaking the silence that surrounds it. That's why I'm so proud to be here to launch Avon and Refuge's FOUR WAYS TO SPEAK OUT campaign. Together we can make a difference. Together we have the power to raise awareness, provide support, and increase the funding for this vital cause."

Also announced at today's conference are the results of new research commissioned by Avon and Refuge into perceptions of domestic violence in the UK, which reveals more than nine in 10 people (92%) claim they don't know anyone experiencing domestic violence. That's despite official statistics showing that one in four women in England and Wales experience domestic violence at some point in their lifetime. The research also shows over

<http://multivu.prnewswire.com/mnr/avon/37733/>

2/5/2010

half of the people questioned (54%) wouldn't know where to turn if they did suspect someone they knew was experiencing domestic violence.

Says Anna Segatti, President of Avon UK:

"As the company for women, empowering women by supporting vital causes like this is part of our DNA. It's an ugly reality that domestic violence affects one in four women in the UK and the majority of people who think they know someone experiencing domestic violence wouldn't know where to turn because the services simply aren't there. Today's event gives something tangible to all those women and men who are either not aware of this silent pandemic or would not know where to turn if they thought someone was suffering."

Says Sandra Horley, OBE, Chief Executive of Refuge:

"It's a shocking fact that one in three local authorities provide no domestic violence services for women whatsoever. Where are abused women supposed to go to get help? What can they do? To whom can they turn? Refuge and Avon have launched this campaign to urge the Government to put an end to this postcode lottery, and to raise awareness of the huge issue of domestic violence. Everyone everywhere must speak out. By failing to speak out against domestic violence, we make ourselves part of the problem."

"Refuge is incredibly grateful to Avon for its unstinting support over the last two years. In this current economic climate, where many corporates are tightening the purse strings, it is a huge reassurance to have such a dedicated partner. With Avon's help we have been able to reach many more women and children living in the terrifying grip of domestic violence."

Avon has supported Refuge for the last two years, donating 80% of the UK proceeds of its empowerment necklace and bracelet to support services for abused women and children. The remaining 20% is donated to UNIFEM in the UK. Worldwide sales have raised \$8.1 million, which has gone towards funding programmes in 53 countries. Avon UK has pledged to more than double its support for domestic violence charities in 2010.

Contacts:

Avon Products, Inc.

Natalie Deacon

+44 (0)7725 150853

Natalie.Deacon@avon.com

Elizabeth P. Bergman

212.282.8197

elizabeth.bergman@avon.com

Video



[Embed this Video](#)

APPENDIX J: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVEY, PAGES 1 & 2

Disclaimer: Be assured that the information received on this survey will be used only for the purpose of assessing awareness of the problem of domestic/intimate violence.

DOMESTIC / INTIMATE VIOLENCE SURVEY

Conducted at St. Paul Baptist Church

December 28, 2008

What does domestic/intimate violence mean to you? Check all that apply.

- a. Physical abuse _____ b. Verbal abuse _____ c. Financial abuse _____ d. Humiliation in front of others _____ e. Over-protective behavior _____ f. Threats to family, pets, friends _____ g. Being intimidating or manipulative _____

Does the local church adequately address the issue of domestic/intimate violence?

- a. Yes _____ b. No _____ c. Not Sure _____

Should the subject be spoken about from the pulpit? Please explain.

- a. Yes _____ b. No _____

Comment: _____

Does domestic/intimate violence happen only to women?

- a. Yes _____ b. No _____ c. Not Sure _____

Should the local church have a ministry to victims of domestic/intimate violence?

- a. Yes _____ b. No _____ c. Not Sure _____

Would you be supportive of such a ministry if the promise of confidentiality was in place?

- a. Yes _____ b. No _____ c. Not Sure _____

Should domestic/intimate violence information (brochures, pamphlets, etc.) be available to local congregations?

a. Yes _____ b. No _____ c. Not Sure _____

Do you know of someone who is a victim of domestic/intimate violence, and is keeping it secret from their family, friends and pastor?

a. Yes _____ b. No _____

If you knew of a victim, would you go to the pastor on their behalf? Please explain.

a. Yes _____

b. No _____

Do you believe a spiritual leader has a right to know if someone is involved in domestic/intimate violence?

a. Yes _____ b. No _____ c. Not Sure _____

Have you ever been involved in domestic/intimate violence? A. Yes _____

b. No _____ c. Not Sure _____

Do you believe the Bible has anything to say about the issue of domestic violence?

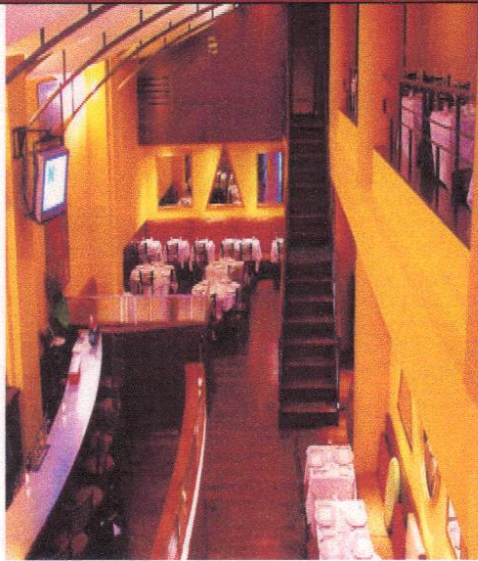
a. Yes _____ b. No _____ c. Not Sure _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE IN THIS SURVEY.

APPENDIX K: B. SMITH'S RESTAURANT FLYER

CoWAP NYC COALITION ON WORKING
WITH ABUSIVE PARTNERS

**INVITES YOU TO AN EVENING OF
LIVE MUSIC + FOOD + COCKTAILS
FOR A CAUSE!**



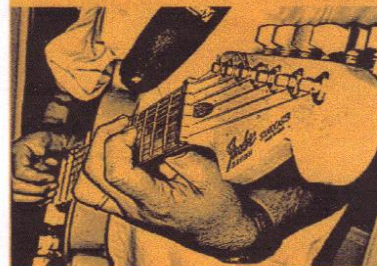
B.SMITH'S IS KINDLY DONATING 20% OF THE PROCEEDS FROM
THIS EVENT, WHICH WILL GO TOWARDS
"ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL: EXPLORING DIVERSE APPROACHES
TO WORKING WITH ABUSIVE PARTNERS"
A FIRST OF ITS KIND NYC CONFERENCE THAT WILL BE HELD IN
JUNE 2009 @ CARDOZO SCHOOL OF LAW. FOR MORE INFO ON THE
CONFERENCE PLEASE VISIT: CHILDRENSAIDSOCIETY.ORG OR
CONNECTNYC.ORG



FOR INFO CONTACT:

QUENTIN @
212.683.0015 EXT 225
QWALCOTT@CONNECTNYC.ORG

**MONDAY
APRIL
13TH
5:00P^{TIL'}
9:00P**



**@ B. SMITH'S
RESTAURANT**

320 W 46TH ST,

NYC, NY

(A,C,E TRAINS TO 42ND ST)

APPENDIX L: A CALL TO MEN BROCHURE

*The Fourth
Annual
National
Conference*

*May 21-22,
2009*

*New York City,
New York*

A CALL TO MEN

The National Association of Men and Women Committed To Ending Violence Against Women



Theater at John Jay
College of Criminal Justice
899 10th Avenue
New York, New York

A CALL TO MEN believes that ending violence against women is primarily the responsibility of men. Although historically it has been almost entirely women who have been at the forefront addressing this issue, we think it is essential that men play a primary role in the solution to end it. To do that, well-meaning men...men who, for the most part don't see themselves as part of the problem...need to get involved. We have invited a group of women and men who are amongst the leaders in pioneering the effort to engage men in addressing the issue of ending violence against women. Please join A CALL TO MEN and this exceptional group of national leaders for this important two day national conference.

(CEU, CASAC and
CLE credits applied for)

Men and Women Coming Together to stand up and speak out!

To End Violence Against Women

This event will be an unprecedented gathering of men and women coming together for the purpose of increasing our knowledge while strategizing and organizing to end violence against women in our communities. We are excited and honored to have you join us in this collective effort to **Stand Up and Speak Out** to end domestic violence, sexual violence and all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.

Conference Presenters will include:

A CALL TO MEN: Tony Porter, Ted Bunch, Gwen Wright, Juan Ramos, Wayne Barnes, David Lomax and Teddy Wright.

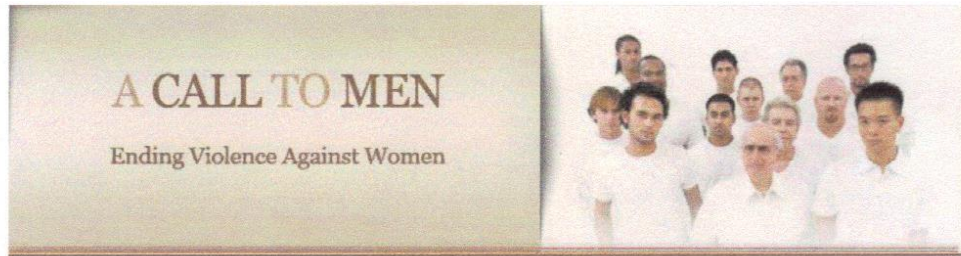
Our Sisters: Rita Smith, *National Coalition Against Domestic Violence* • Sheryl Cates, *Texas Council on Family Violence & the National Domestic Violence Hotline* • Tonya Lovelace, *The Women of Color Network* • Katie Gentile Ph.D., *John Jay College Women's Center* • Desiree Allen Cruz, *Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation* • Patricia Eng, *The Ms. Foundation* • Nana Fosu-Randall, *Voices of African Mothers* • Bea Hanson, *Safe Horizon* • Quincy Lucas, *National Domestic Violence Advocate* • Anne Menard and Annika Gifford, *The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence*.

Our Brothers: Paul Kivel, *Author-Activist & Violence Prevention Educator* • Lundy Bancroft, *Author-Workshop Leader & Activist* • Jackson Katz, *Educator, Author and Social Critic* • Byron Hurt, *filmmaker and activist* • Casey Gwinn, *YWCA-San Diego & Family Justice Center Alliance* • Michael Haynes, *NFL Vice President of Player and Employee Development & NFL Hall of Fame Inductee* • Peter Buffett, *The NoVo Foundation* • Rus Funk, *MENSWORK: Eliminating Violence Against Women, Inc.* • Robert Jensen Ph.D., *University of Texas at Austin* • Steve Botkin, *Men's Resources International* • Oliver Williams Ph.D., *Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community* • Etiony Aldarondo Ph.D., *School of Education-University of Miami* • Joe Ehrman, *Coach-Lecturer & Building Men and Women For Others* • Ulester Douglas, *Men Stopping Violence* • Rob Okun, *Voice Male Magazine: Changing Men in Changing Times* • David Garvin, *Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County* • Juan Carlos Arean, *Family Violence Prevention Fund* • Dick Bathrick, *Men Stopping Violence* • Patrick Gaston, *The Verizon Foundation* • Kevin Miller, *Northwest Men's Project* • Jess Nowland, *Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation* • John Tramel, *Men Stopping Violence* • Neil Irvin, *Men Can Stop Rape* • Zell Miller, *SafePlace* • Quentin Walcott, *Connect* • Dr. Kevin Lucas, *Witney's Lights, Inc.*

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APPENDIX M: A CALL TO MEN – 10 THINGS



10 Things Men Can Do To End Men's Violence Against Women

1. Acknowledge and understand how sexism, male dominance and male privilege lay the foundation for all forms of violence against women.
2. Examine and challenge our individual sexism and the role that we play in supporting men who are abusive.
3. Recognize and stop colluding with other men by getting out of our socially defined roles, and take a stance to end violence against women.
4. Remember that our silence is affirming. When we choose not to speak out against men's violence, we are supporting it.
5. Educate and re-educate our sons and other young men about our responsibility in ending men's violence against women.
6. **Break out of the "man box"**- Challenge traditional images of manhood that stop us from actively taking a stand to end violence against women.
7. Accept and own our responsibility that violence against women will not end until men become part of the solution to end it. We must take an active role in creating a cultural and social shift that no longer tolerates violence against women.
8. Stop supporting the notion that men's violence against women is due to mental illness, lack of anger management skills, chemical dependency, stress, etc... Violence against women is rooted in the historic oppression of women and the outgrowth of the socialization of men.
9. Take responsibility for creating appropriate and effective ways to develop systems to educate and hold men accountable.
10. Create systems of accountability to women in your community. Violence and discrimination against women will end only when we take direction from those who understand it most, women.

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APPENDIX N: LOVE DOES NOT HURT FLYER

LOVE DOES NOT HURT!

Domestic Violence Seminar

Saturday, April 25, 2009
9:00am - 3:00pm

St. Paul Baptist Church
249 West 132nd Street
New York, NY 10027
(bet. Adam C. Powell & Frederick Douglas Blvds.)
Rev. Dr. V. DuWayne Battle, Pastor

Sponsored by
Reverend Linda W. Spears, M.Div.
Minister of Congregational Care and Evangelism

- * Come, discover, learn, and share
- * Experts in domestic violence from various faith communities
- * Short film on domestic violence
- * Literature will be available

\$15.00 donation
8:00am – 9:00am – Registration & Continental Breakfast
Lunch will be served

To pre-register and for further information contact
Rev. Spears at 646-372-2211

APPENDIX O: SECOND PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH FLYER

Community Health and Awareness Ministry
And
Beatitudes Ministry
Presents

When My Reality Conflicts with My Theology! **An Open Discussion**

Order of the Day



DV

***Testing is available with Gay Men of African Descent/
Incentives Available while they last***

9:30 - 9:45am Registration
9:30 - 10:00am Continental Breakfast
10:00 - 10:15am Litany and Prayer
Rev. Lidia Leudo, The Beatitudes Ministry
10:15 - 10:30am Greetings
Rev. Kyshawn White, Pastor
Second Providence Baptist Church
10:30am Introduction of Panel
S. Darlene Cheek, Facilitator
The Balm In Gilead
*Rev. Anna Smith, MSW; Mr. Quentin Walcott, Dir., CONNECT CTI;
Mr. Troy Taylor, St. Luke AME Church; Rev. Linda Spears, St. Paul Baptist Church*
10:35 - 11:35am Questions and Answers
11:35 - 11:45am Break
11:45 - 12:45pm Questions and Answers
12:45pm Break
12:55 - 1:35pm Open Dialogue
1:35pm Panel Wrap-Up

HIV / AIDS

APPENDIX P: CONNECT, EMPOWERMENT & TRAINING



Engaging Communities

Across New York's richly diverse communities, many survivors of family or gender violence do not or cannot reach support services. Some are reluctant to identify as abused. Others fear government services or face cultural and linguistic barriers. CONNECT's **Community Empowerment Program**, one of the first of its kind in the United States, assists communities in designing violence prevention and early intervention strategies to meet local needs. These strategies address the individual and social patterns that reinforce violent behavior.

Premised on the notion that individuals hold the power to change their communities, the program holds neighborhood forums to raise awareness and build trust. It rallies primary sources of support, such as social service providers, grassroots activists, faith-based organizations and civic leaders. Training workshops explore social, legal, cultural, emotional and health issues, and develop technical skills for conducting research, designing programs and fundraising.

Community partners look for ways to build on existing infrastructure and to channel more community resources into violence prevention. They make connections with youth groups, HIV/AIDS services, the clergy, the media, small businesses and others. These efforts collectively weave strong networks, ensuring that support systems will take root and thrive.

CONNECT brings people together to tailor local solutions to community concerns.

Deepening Understanding

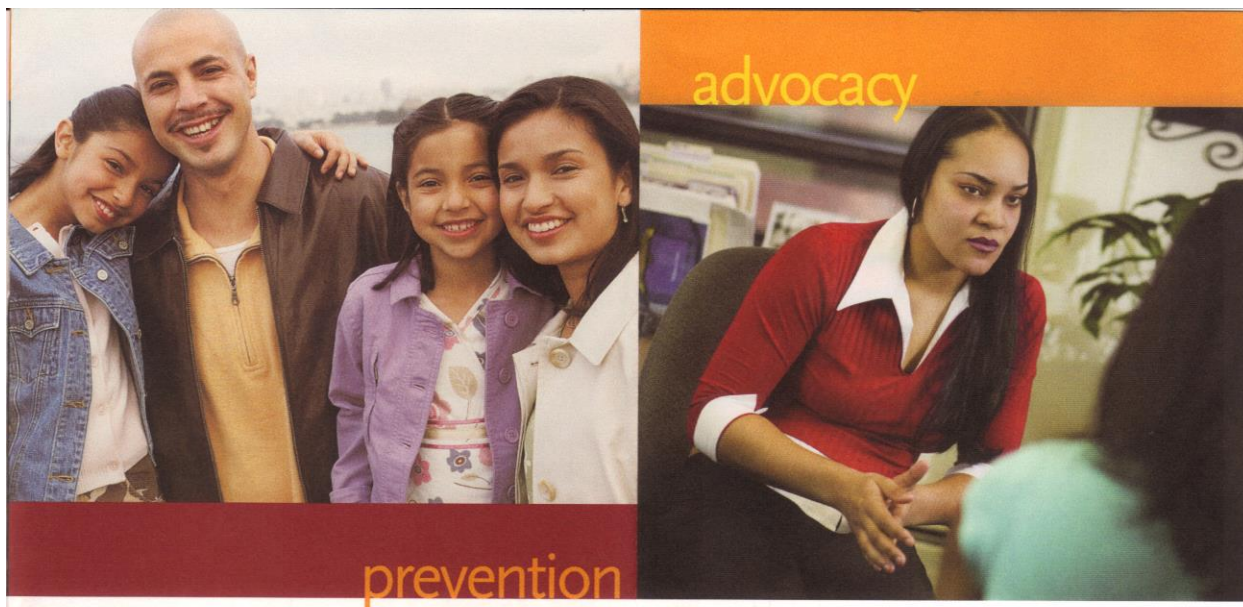
An Early Head Start Teacher who graduated from the **CONNECT Training Institute (CTI)** knows that inviting local fathers for computer training presents a chance to start talking about family violence. He has found that interest is high: "Sometimes we spend so much time talking we don't get to the computers! The mothers tell teachers that they see changes in their lives." Some fathers have been referred to a batterer's intervention group.

CONNECT established CTI to expand the number of community leaders and professionals with an in-depth awareness of the complex dynamics of family violence. Participants return to their communities with a transformed understanding of power and control, gender, and the full range of consequences from violence. CTI graduates use their insights to create new community resources for prevention and early intervention in settings such as workplaces, schools, health care centers and faith communities.

Intensive training sessions delve into core issues: the empowerment of women and girls, understanding abusive men, parenting and domestic violence, and impacts on children who witness violence. Special seminars reach professional groups such as clergy members, social workers and health care providers.

The CONNECT Training Institute transforms awareness of the causes and consequences of violence.

APPENDIX Q: CONNECT, PREVENTION & ADVOCACY



Making Connections

In up to 70 percent of child abuse cases, the mother is also abused. But within child welfare agencies, limited understanding of this overlap has often resulted in ineffective and even dangerous interventions, such as the inappropriate separation of children from mothers who are not themselves abusers. CONNECT's **Family Violence Prevention Program** helps over 50 child welfare organizations in New York City keep mothers and children safe and together, while taking steps to hold batterers accountable for their actions.

The program equips child welfare workers with the skills to intervene in families struggling with violence. They attend intensive training sessions and learn to use CONNECT's unique family violence screening questionnaire. Ongoing participation in educational seminars helps child welfare staff to continue increasing their knowledge and skills.

One participant says, "The training has enabled my staff to identify more families in which domestic violence is a precipitating factor in child abuse. They feel more comfortable talking about violence in the home. The camaraderie and collaboration, education and financial resources that we receive from CONNECT have been tremendous."

Recognizing the links between child abuse and family violence can keep families safer.

Improving Access to the Law

A graduate of CONNECT training and a teacher of English as a second language, Edna* suspected that her student Afina was in an abusive marriage. She helped Afina contact CONNECT's **Legal Advocacy Helpline** for advice on her rights and legal options. When Afina decided to leave her home, a partner in CONNECT's Brooklyn network of service providers found her safe shelter in a place where her native language was spoken.

Navigating a complex legal system is difficult for everyone, but especially for survivors of violence. CONNECT's Legal Advocacy Helpline reduces the barriers by providing immediate information on the police, courts and district attorneys; it is the only service of its kind in New York City. Helpline advocates also collaborate with other agencies to make service referrals and locate legal representation.

A second CONNECT legal advocacy initiative reaches out to victims who have filed a domestic incident report with the 25th police precinct in East Harlem. The Coordinated Action Against Violence program helps survivors secure an array of support services—from short-term counseling to orders of protection. Its success has encouraged other community organizations to adopt the same model.

Legal Advocacy Helpline (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.): 212 683 0605

**Names and details have been changed.*

CONNECT's legal outreach programs help survivors understand their options.

APPENDIX R: SERMONS

SERMON 1: TAMAR'S TERROR

St. Paul Baptist Church

Sunday, January 11, 2009 – 11am

“TAMAR'S TERROR”

II Samuel 13:1-14

I'm going to tell you a story today that might shock some of you, and some might even think it's X-rated. But for too long we've been burying our heads the sand and for too long women have been victimized. Today's text deals with the rape of a young woman by someone she trusted and probably looked up to, her own brother, or rather her half brother; they had the same father but different mothers. And whether we like it or not, this scenario is played out daily in this country and in many parts of the world. Scriptures such as this one and others like it are generally skimmed over because it makes most Christians uncomfortable. But until we face the demons in our lives, they will never leave us. And, if God thought this story was important enough to allow into His Word then it should also be important enough for us to talk about.

There are three main players in this saga, and what I would call two “extras.” First there's Absalom and Tamar who are full siblings because they have the same mother and father; Amnon on the other hand shares the same father but was born of a different mother. Both these young men are princes of Israel because their father is King David. Amnon could have probably had his pick of the fairest young virgins of the land, but he fell in love with his sister and desired an incestuous relationship.

This girl was a virgin, a princess who was no doubt saving herself for the right young man to marry (with her daddy's approval of course). Like most young girls she had dreamed about the day she would put on her finery and have a great week-long marriage celebration. But that has now been taken from her.

You see, at first Amnon was only thinking about Tamar and pining away for her. But then comes their cousin, Jonadab with his advice. He sees that Amnon isn't behaving like himself, not eating right, not sleeping well, and losing weight. So he inquires as to what could possibly be wrong; what could the king's son have to worry about? Amnon responds with "I'm in love with my sister, Tamar." Instead of telling him to forget her and think about some of the other young virgins in Israel, he encourages the guy in this craziness. The cousin actually hatches the plan for Amnon to sexually abuse his sister. Verse 3 of our text says that he was "very crafty." As I read that, I was reminded of the creature in Genesis who had beguiled Eve; this guy seemed to be very much like the serpent.

It's so important that we be careful who we take counsel from. Just because you hang out with someone, just because you have a great friendship, just because you are related, does not mean they have your best interest at heart. Jonadab cooks up this wicked plan. Lay on your bed and pretend to be sick, then when your father comes to see about you, ask him to let Tamar come prepare food and feed it to you. Alright, the plan worked; David came and agreed to Amnon's request. First of all, what was David thinking? Didn't he find this the slightest bit out of the ordinary? She was a princess. Princesses didn't mix up and bake bread; they have a whole slew of servants for that.

But you have to understand, David was a man who put no restraints upon his sons; they were basically allowed to do whatever they wanted to, and got away with doing it. But should we be surprised by that? Absolutely not! David did pretty much the same for most of his life. He unwittingly sent his daughter into the brother's house to be abused. In all fairness, David had no idea what his son was planning to do, however, David was *indirectly* responsible for the actions of his offspring.

In II Samuel 11 we find the story of David's own sexual abuse of a woman, when he commanded the wife of Uriah to come and lay with him. The final sentence of verse 27 says: "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord." When you have children, you need to be very careful how you live and treat other people. David had done a lot of dirt in his day, and Exodus 34:7 tells us that "The sins of the fathers fall upon the children unto the third and fourth generations." That lustful seed was already in David's sons at birth. I've heard it said that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. They all had the mindset of their father: I can have any woman I desire, no matter who she is. You see, that's why the cousin didn't skip a beat when he heard what Amnon's problem was. Oh, you want to sleep with your sister, no problem, here's what you do.

So Tamar comes, bakes the cakes and placed them in the dining room so he could come and eat. We know he did not get up because Verse 10 says he told her to "Bring the food into the bedroom and feed me with your own hand." Then he instructs all the servants and bodyguards to leave the two of them alone.

Now I asked myself, what must she be thinking at this point? Does she naively believe he's so sick that he can't get out of bed to eat? Or, is she beginning to be just a little bit uncomfortable? Is she thinking that somehow this doesn't feel quite right? Nevertheless she does as he asks and begins to feed him.

Suddenly, this man who's so bedridden grabs her and asks her to lie with him. Now his intentions are crystal clear to Tamar and she's afraid. She begs him, "Don't my brother, don't force me, please don't do this wickedness, these kinds of things should not be done in Israel. If you do this you're gonna look like a fool and I'll be so full of shame that I won't be able to hold my head up. If you would just speak to the king he would not keep me from you. Ask him for my hand in marriage; I'm sure he would agree.

I believe Tamar said this because she had probably heard growing up about the issue Abraham had with King Abimelech in Genesis 20. He told the king Sarah was his sister, therefore the king was getting ready to make her his next concubine, wife or something. But God came to the king in a dream and told him, "Do not touch that man's wife," but you see, Abraham didn't completely lie. In Genesis 20:12 it states that Sarah and Abraham had the same father, whose name was Terah, but different mothers. That's why Tamar told Amnon, that if he spoke to the king he would allow them to marry. But he was driven by the lustful spirit inherited from David, so he couldn't do the honorable thing and wait for marriage; he went ahead and forcibly raped this young virgin sister of his.

Now, here's the kicker, the minute he got what he wanted, all this great love he had for her became hatred. The Bible says that the hatred was ever greater than the love had been. Does this sound familiar to anyone? Many young ladies have been disillusioned in this same way. Even when it isn't rape, and you consent to the act, you men will still turn on you and not want to see you anymore. It happens every day! If only we could get young girls, *and older women*, to be careful about allowing themselves to be placed in positions where they can be taken advantage of, a lot of heartache would be averted.

Now he wants to banish her, wants her out of his sight. "Arise and be gone!" But Tamar replies "No indeed. This evil of sending me away is worse than what you already did." You have to understand, she doesn't even want to go outside and face anybody. His house is full of servants who, even though he sent them away, probably heard the screaming and carrying on. Tamar knew she would have to forever bear the shame of what has happened to her.

This reminds me of women who have been raped or abused in some other way, but are made to feel like the perpetrator instead of the victim. You've all heard about or watched television dramas where women are drilled by lawyers in courtrooms, sometimes to the point of breaking down, while their attacker sits at the desk with a smug look of superiority. That's why some women don't tell at all, and still others are driven to commit suicide.

When Tamar refuses to leave, Amnon calls a servant, and I can just imagine him giving her a shove as he said, “Here, put this woman away from me and bolt the door behind her.” How much more of an insult could he deliver? How much more degrading could he have been? This is the king’s daughter, his little sister, but he treats her like any other woman who has no power.

Having no other choice she went out of his house and tore her outer garment which was a special kind of robe that was worn by all the virgin daughters of King David. She tore hers and put ashes on her head to signify that she was in a state of mourning. And indeed she should have been in grief because something wonderful has been taken from her; innocence has left her, peace and tranquility are now gone, and hope and security are things of the past. All lost in one selfish act.

She went home crying bitterly and her brother Absalom asked her what was the problem. Has your brother Amnon been with you? Why did he ask her that particular question? Had he heard something? Did he know about this beforehand? It seems to me he’s taking it rather lightly by saying to her, “Don’t take this thing to heart, after all he is your brother.” What kind of a statement is that? Why didn’t he just storm over to Amnon’s place and confront him? Instead he tells her to keep quiet and don’t take it so seriously. The only thing he did at this point was to stop speaking to his brother.

The Bible says but when King David heard about it he was very angry, but it doesn’t say that he chastised his son in any way. When Absalom saw that their father didn’t do anything, his hatred for his brother began to grow, and for two full years he planned and plotted to handle this situation himself.

Bitterness had eaten away at his spirit and the thought of getting even had crossed his mind many times, however, no suitable opportunity had presented itself.

Absalom decided to invite his father and all his brothers to meet him in Baal Hazor, near Ephraim, which was approximately 14 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

This was the time when sheep shearing was done and great feasts took place at the site. Absalom asked his father and his servants to honor him with a royal visit but David said “Nay my son, let us not all go, lest we be chargeable unto thee,” That word “chargeable” means to be heavy or burdensome. See, the presence of the king’s court might have been too great a financial burden for him. Then he requested that his father allow Amnon to go with his other brothers. David seemed a bit suspicious at first because he asked, “Why should he go with you?” Understand that their father knew of Absalom’s hatred for his brother and thought it strange that Amnon would be invited to anything Absalom was hosting.

Finally David relented and allowed all the princes to attend the sheep shearing celebration. Absalom spoke with his servants and gave instructions to keep a close eye on Amnon. “Listen, when Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, strike Amnon down, then kill him.” There must have been a look of absolute disbelief because he spoke again and said, “Don’t be afraid, have not I given you this order?” Be strong and brave. Absalom was justifiably angry; justice was in demand. But who should have meted out that justice? It should have been King David, the father of all three of them. It was his place to chastise his son the minute he heard about the rape of his daughter.

And how do you think she felt these past two years, realizing her father never did a thing to the brother? If it had been properly handled, Amnon may not have had to lose his life. I feel that Absalom invited *all* the other sons of David to come out to witness the killing of Amnon just in case anybody else had any ideas about touching any of his sisters again. Somehow word got back to the king that ALL his sons had been slain by Absalom, that none was left alive. You ever notice how people like to embellish bad news? Always trying to make it sound worse than it actually is? He probably saw the first one die and just assumed the others would follow.

But the news caused great remorse in Jerusalem and King David arose from his throne, tore his garment in grief and lay on the earth in mourning, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn as well. Finally David's nephew, Jonadab, who was behind this whole tragedy to start with, he comes forward to comfort the king. He says, "My lord, don't believe all your sons have been killed; only Amnon is dead." He goes on to say that Absalom had determined his brother would have this appointment with death ever since the day he forced Tamar. He's now trying to ingratiate himself with the king because David doesn't know his part in all this.

Soon the guard in the watchtower spied a pack of fast moving mules carrying the king's sons, approaching from the west side of Jerusalem, and it was evident that the nephew's words were true. Absalom knew the gravity of the situation and rather than face his father he resolved to hide until things cooled off. He fled to Talmai, King of Geshur.

This self imposed exile lasted three years and all the while David mourned every day for his firstborn son who had been killed. David could have gone after Absalom and dealt with him but he had too much respect for King Talmai and therefore did not follow his son. But after a while he began to miss Absalom also and wished for him to come back to Jerusalem. David sent Joab, his trusted servant to go and get him, but he and Absalom did not lay eyes on one another for two more years.

So much more took place in this account of David and his children in the following chapters, but the important thing we want to remember is that violence against women is not a new phenomenon, it's something that has been going on for many thousands of years. Also, it doesn't just happen to poor women, uneducated women or women of color. This was a king's daughter who was brutally raped and thrown out into the street like a common prostitute.

Does the church have a responsibility to help women like Tamar? Yes we absolutely do. Maybe not in the way Absalom felt he was helping, but help we must.

Some might ask the question: Why did King David have all these troubles in his life if he was so close to God? If my maternal grandmother were here today she would say, "You reap what you sow child," and "King David's chickens have now come home to roost."

GOD BLESS YOU

SERMON 2
NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO NAME

St. Paul Baptist Church

Tuesday, March 19, 2009 – 6pm

“NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO NAME”

Judges 19:20-30

Within the lines of this text we find a most insidious account of domestic violence against a woman. It is the story that begins with a Levite of Ephraim, going to Bethlehem and securing a woman or concubine, to presumably be a wife to him. After being together for a period of time, she left him and went back to her father's home.

When four months had passed her husband went to fetch her. We aren't told in scripture why this woman left her home, however seeing how she's treated as we further examine this text I would venture to say it could very well have been because of an abusive situation. Women don't just get up and leave a good husband and a comfortable home without reason.

The father made a very elaborate show of hospitality once the Levite arrived at his home. Each time the two of them prepared to leave and continue their journey, the woman's father would beg them to stay just one more day. Perhaps her father had some inkling of what his daughter had gone through and wanted to spare her more suffering. In any case he had to abide by the laws of the land and allow her to go with her husband.

After several false starts they finally left and began traveling toward Jerusalem. But rather than spend the night in Jebus, a Gentile city, they pushed on to Gibeah.

Finally arriving there they sit in the town square, fully prepared to make that their abode for the evening, and initially no one asked them inside their home. However, one of the Levite's countrymen, an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was working in this place saw them and began making inquiries. For you see he knew what kind of place this was, and that being in the street after dark was unsafe. His initial invitation was turned down but he eventually convinced the Levite to come under his roof where they would be safe.

After they had refreshed themselves and were sitting and enjoying one another's company there came a pounding on the door of the home. Outside were men demanding that they be allowed to have access to the male travelers who had come into the house so they could enjoy sexual relations with them. The owner of the house begged and pleaded with the men not to do such a vile thing but they were insistent and continued banging the door.

Finally the man came out and offered to them his own virgin and the Levites wife. First of all, I have a problem with a father giving up his own flesh and blood to be raped. Where is his sense of protection? Where is that love that would cause most fathers to die in order to protect their child? This young woman must have been appalled to think that the one who had taken care of her all these years, is now allowing her to be injured and possibly killed by a band of sex crazed men.

Not only did he offer his daughter but the Levite's woman as well. I'm sure they must have discussed it first and the Levite consented. Here are two women who have no power whatsoever, who have no say so over who touches their bodies, or what happens to them; two women who aren't even important enough to name. So the Levite himself pushes his wife outside where she is gang raped and abused throughout the night by a number of men.

Whatever happened to a man protecting his wife at all cost, even at the risk of his own life? What I see happening here is that the men are so concerned with protecting their own flesh that they would readily sacrifice their loved ones.

Just in case there was any question about patriarchy, this incident has answered it. Abandoned by her father, betrayed by her husband, raped and tortured by a mob, this woman is trapped in a world of men. She has nowhere to go but back to the husband who threw her out, only to find that the door of hospitality and safety is still closed against her. She finds her way back to the house and lies down at the door. The next morning when the Levite gets ready to leave he has to step over her bruised and battered body. "Get up and let's go" he says to her, but there is no response.

He picks her up and puts her on a donkey, heading for home. Upon reaching their dwelling place the Levite took a knife and cut up his wife into twelve pieces, and sent them to the twelve tribes of Israel to summon an assembly. He is further abusing this poor woman by treating her like a sacrificial animal instead of giving her a decent burial.

The woman's husband (according to Jud. 20:4) went and told all Israel what had happened to her and requested their help in avenging her death. All of them asked for the men of Gibeah who had committed this crime to come forward to be executed. The tribe of Benjamin refused to do this so the battle ensued. They won the first two battles but the third time God gave the tribe of Benjamin into the hands of the Israelites.

Throughout this account the woman has been allowed no speech. Now, it's her broken body that speaks to all Israel. Her message is that she has been betrayed by all the men with whom she has come in contact. The Levite's message is that his honor has been insulted, his life threatened and his property damaged. Even his version of what happened removes him from culpability. What Israel hears is a message of outrage and an excuse for war.

The people came together and remedied the situation, just as we in the faith community must draw ourselves together to eradicate domestic violence in our midst.

GOD BLESS YOU

SERMON 3: DINAH'S DISGRACE

St. Paul Baptist Church

Sunday, April 26, 2009 – 11am

"DINAH'S DISGRACE"

Genesis 34:1-7

My first domestic violence sermon was preached back in January when I talked to you about "Tamar's Terror." At that time I believe I mentioned that I needed to do three such messages as part of my Doctoral Dissertation. The second, Hagar's Horror was done on March 17th, therefore today's message completes the three. Dinah's situation is similar in that it speaks about a similar issue; that being the rape of a young virgin. The difference this time is that the perpetrator of the crime is not a relative. Dinah's name means "justice," and you will see later just how fitting that is. Dinah was the daughter of Jacob and his wife Leah. They had six sons prior to her birth; no other daughters are mentioned so it is believed she was the only one.

If you will remember Jacob fathered twelve sons by four different women. Leah was the mother of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar & Zebulun. Rachel, the wife Jacob really loved, gave birth to Joseph and Benjamin. Leah's maid Zilpah had Gad and Asher, and Rachel's maid Bilhah was the mother of Dan and Naphtali.

Jacob was one half of a set of twins who, with his brother Esau, was born to Issac and Rebekah. And we know their story, how Issac loved Esau more and how Jacob was their mother's favorite. The twins have now grown up, married and had children of their own. As stated, Jacob fathered 12 sons and this one daughter named

Dinah. Scripture tells us that one day she went out from her parents' home to visit with other young women, probably cousins around her own age, in another part of the land. As she traveled she came to the attention of a young man named Shechem, who was the son of a man called Hamor. This was a rich and powerful man who had probably raised his son to believe he could have whatever he desired. The Bible tell sus that he saw her, took her and raped her.

Now that we've got that out of the way, the first question I'd like to ask is this: "How did this young man get so close to her?" Young unmarried women, especially those of any means, did not travel alone in those days. They were usually escorted everywhere, particularly if it was any distance from her home. How was it possible for this young man to snatch her and rape her? Where was her maidservant? Where were the men who worked for Jacob who should have been taking her where she was going? I was riding in a car recently with some friends and one of the males said, "I don't like to see young women walking alone at certain times." Even in today's society, there are some places women should not go alone.

Scripture doesn't tell us how this rape was able to take place, but our text does say that the young man Shechem had a very strong love for Dinah and tried to win her affection. Hearing this leads me to believe that they probably knew of one another, or at the very least he had been looking at her for some time and had developed feelings for her. He had even spoken to his father and asked him to get this girl for him because he wanted to marry her.

Now my second question is: If Shechem really loved Dinah, why didn't he ask for her hand in marriage prior to taking her virginity and disgracing her before all Israel? What kind of a thought process makes a man believe a woman would marry him and live with him happily ever after, once he has forcibly raped her? Is that not insanity?

After a period of time word reaches her father Jacob that Dinah has been violated by this young man. Jacob doesn't say anything immediately because his sons were all out in the field herding cattle, so he decided to wait for their return. Shechem's father Hamor meanwhile comes to speak with Jacob about the possibility of their two children getting married, and Jacob's sons just happen to arrive home at the same time.

Apparently Shechem's father didn't believe his son did anything wrong. Because if any of you who are fathers knew that someone had just raped your virgin daughter, I don't think you would sit down and talk calmly with that person or his father about their marrying. Shechem had done a very disgraceful thing to Jacob's family and his sons are furious. Hamor is trying to plead his son's case to Jacob and his sons, telling them how much Shechem really loves Dinah and wants her to be his wife. He begs them, "please let her marry my son."

Then Hamor takes it a step further and comes up with what he thinks is this wonderful idea. I know! Why don't you settle on this land with us? And we will allow you to marry our daughters and we will marry yours; it'll be great and we will become one people. There's just one problem with this proposal. God had already told Jacob, his father, grandfather and all those before him, not to intermarry with the peoples they found in this land. Look at Exodus 23:29-33 and Ezra 10:2. Jacob knew full well that

the land was supposed to be Israel's anyway, but here's Hamor saying **we will allow you** to acquire or purchase land and trade with us.

After Hamor makes his plea, then his son speaks up and makes his own request to Dinah's family. First he asks them to be kind to him, he believes they should extend compassion to him after what he has done to their daughter and sister. How dare he think that he deserves anything from this family but their wrath? He begs Jacob for the hand of his daughter, promising anything under the sun, no matter how much it costs. At this point Jacob appears to be silent but those twelve sons seem to be thinking as one person. They've stepped to the forefront and taken over the negotiations with Hamor and Shechem. Their response is one of indignation. "We could not possibly allow that to happen (meaning a marriage between them) because you are not circumcised. For our sister to marry such a man would be a disgrace."

They go on to say, "But wait a minute, there is a solution, one that just might work." Remember these are Jacob's sons so they all have that same devious nature he used to have before the Lord got a hold of him. They convince Shechem and his father the only way this marriage could ever take place is if every man among them, or of their town, be circumcised. If that happens then we will live here with you, intermarry with you, and become one people.

Hamor and Shechem are so excited that they think they're finally going to get what they've been asking for all this time, so they waste no time bringing this information to the other men. They went to see the town leaders and put this proposal on the table, that every one of them be circumcised so this young man, who was highly

respected, could marry the young woman he had raped. The two presented a great package to their countrymen:

#1 – These men are our friends

#2 – Let's invite them to stay here and trade

#3 – There's enough land, and we can intermarry with them

#4 – If they stay, all their flocks & possessions will become ours. Remember Jacob had great wealth when he separated from his uncle Laban; he was very rich in cattle.

They go on in their sales pitch. So we'll be getting a lot more than just a bride for young Shechem. It's obvious to see that their intentions were not altogether honorable. They wanted to get over on Jacob's family, but they didn't know the history of who they were messing with. All the men agreed and allowed themselves to be circumcised. Have you heard the expression "no honor among thieves?" Shechem and his father thought they would be throwing a sucker punch to Jacob and his family but they will soon find out that they are the ones about to be played. Three days after every man has been circumcised, they're laid up, still in a great deal of pain. No doubt, thoughts of all the wealth they're gonna get from Jacob are going through their heads and may even serve to ease the pain a little bit.

But those dreams were never to be realized. While they are recuperating, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers took their swords and came and killed every one of those circumcised men. Then they also killed Hamor and Shechem and

took their sister Dinah out of his house; for they had already allowed her to go with him and he thought all that had to happen was the ceremony. Then they went and spoiled the city, which means they took everything, all the sheep and oxen, all the wealth, all the children and women of these slain men.

Now when all this was done Jacob was upset with Simeon and Levi. He said to them in verse 30, “You have made trouble for me; my name now stinks among the inhabitants of this land. You have caused the Canaanites and the Perizzites to now want to come against me in battle and you know that there’s not many of us Israelites in this land; I and my house shall be destroyed.” But the only answer Jacob’s sons gave was this: SHOULD HE HAVE TREATED OUR SISTER LIKE A PROSTITUTE?” You are the father of the girl Jacob, how dare you be more concerned about your own skin than you are about her?

Once again, we find a man more concerned about himself than his daughter whom he should have been protecting. What does this remind you of? It’s very similar to the situation with David’s daughter Tamar, when she was raped by her half brother Amnon. Her father also did nothing even though he was the king; it was her brother Absalom who was so incensed that he took it upon himself to defend her honor. In our communities, a lot of our young ladies aren’t being raised in the home with their biological fathers, and if they are around many of them aren’t doing right by their daughters.

That’s where brothers, uncles, grandpas and cousins come in. Any male relative that can be a positive influence in the life of our daughters is a plus today. It takes all of

us to help in the raising of our children. Good mentors and role models are so important to our communities so that these kinds of incidences are totally eradicated and our young women know their worth, and not fear being violated by any man.

GOD BLESS YOU

SERMON 4: HAGAR'S HORROR

St. Paul Baptist Church

Sunday, October 11, 2009 – 11am

HAGAR'S HORROR

Genesis 16

I'm sure none of you thought of domestic violence as you read this text over the years; I admit that I did not until I began a closer study of just what constitutes domestic violence. As we further examine this story of Hagar in Gen. 16 we begin to learn some things about her. We know that she is an Egyptian slave woman living in the home of a wealthy, but childless couple, Abram and Sarai. It is believed that Hagar's main function was to take care of the needs of her mistress; she was basically Sarai's servant.

In Hebrew history women who did not bear children were not looked upon very favorably by the rest of society. Sarai desperately wanted to give her husband a child to carry his legacy into the future and remove her own reproach, but she was not able to do so. Now they are both well up in age and she feels that the time is long past for her to conceive and bring forth a child for Abram.

Like most of us who feel we need to help God in blessing us, Sarai began to hatch a plan in her own mind. Since Hagar was her servant and had no say over what happened in her life, she would use her young and vibrant womb to have the child she so desperately needed.

Here is a young woman caught up in the scheme of an older woman in the depths of depression and despair because of her barren-ness. I have heard it said that Hagar was like a second wife to Abram however, I don't get the sense that they had ever had a sexual relationship with one another until Sarai told them to. She presented the plan to Abram and he agreed. It is one thing to be bought as a slave and have no control over any aspect of your life, but it adds insult to injury when one is made to lie down and submit to sexual molestation and rape by an old man the one is neither in love with nor attracted to. All this was done to fulfill another woman's fantasy.

I am reminded of my own ancestors in these United States who were made to conceive, carry and experience the pain of childbirth for the satisfaction and gain of others. To make matters worse, the child Hagar would bring forth won't even belong to her, but she's the one who will have to nurse him at her breast, changes his diapers and literally raise him for someone else.

Once Hagar realizes she is pregnant with Abram's child she gets a little beside herself. I suppose it is human nature to want to, just a little bit, rub this in the face of Sarai. Now she thinks of herself as better than her mistress because she has achieved this great feat. She may even have thought that Abram would love her more because of this child she carries. In any case she begins to disrespect Sarai and be insolent in her presence. Hagar might have gone so far as to actually taunt Sarai with her pregnancy. Whatever the case was, we are told that Sarai was not pleased with the attitude coming at her.

When she saw the girl's hatred toward her she blamed her husband; the fault is all yours Abram; you laid down with my servant and now she is pregnant and is despising me. Poor Abram, he was only doing what he thought would please his wife but this arrangement has backfired on all three of them. Abram loves Sarai and wants her to be happy at all cost, therefore he tells her to do whatever she wishes with her servant. Sarai begins to treat Hagar badly and she runs away from home, only to be found by an angel of the Lord, while sitting next to a spring.

Then angel asked two questions: where are you coming from, and where are you going? Of course the answers were already known because it was God who sent the angel to minister unto Hagar. She answers the first one, but not the second, she stated that she was running away from her mistress. She probably had no idea of where to go from there. Some have said that perhaps she was trying to make it back to Egypt since the road to Shur leads that way, however scripture doesn't give us that information.

The angel informed her of the sex of her child and also what his name shall be. Hagar was also told some things about the character of the son she would soon bring forth and then the angel gently encourages her to go back and submit herself to her mistress, letting her know that God will have mercy upon her and her child as long as she is obedient.

Long story short, all three of these people have engaged in behavior that was out of the will of the Lord. Hagar was just an incubator to be used by Abram and Sarai to fulfill their wishes. I believe she felt alone and frightened just like some women today who are trapped in situations in which they have little or no control.

GOD BLESS YOU

APPENDIX S: CHURCH RESOURCE TABLE



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